

THE COMMONWEAL

*A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts
and Public Affairs*

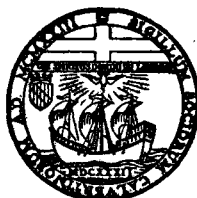
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Exile of Religion.....	479	Mexico on Sunday Morning.....	James J. Walsh 492
Week by Week	480	A Potential Poet's Alibi.....	Brigid M. Walsh 493
Turkey in the Straw.....	483	Painter of Chiefs.....	Vincent Engels 494
This Man Bruening	Max Jordan 485	The Play and Screen.....	Richard Dana Skinner 496
The Dulse-gatherers: Bay of Fundy (<i>verse</i>)		Communications	497
	Grace Hazard Conkling 486	Books	John Stapleton,
The Farmer's Santa Claus.....	Ernest A. Dewey 487		Cuthbert Wright, Henry Kirk,
Scarecrow (<i>verse</i>).....	Maud E. Uschold 489		Mary Ellen Chase, Mary Kolars,
Daring and the Philosopher.....	John K. Ryan 490		John Gilland Brunini, Gerald B. Phelan 500

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THE EXILE OF RELIGION

IN CELEBRATING its eightieth anniversary, the New York Times, which undoubtedly is the world's most complete, most reliable and most useful daily newspaper, gives its readers, in its issue for September 13, a vision of the world as it will be eighty years hence. It does not do so in its own words. It depends upon the forecasts of a group of those whom it has selected as "leaders in various fields." Yet by modestly, or prudently, refraining from exercising journalistic prophecy directly, the Times reveals its guiding principles more clearly than if it had depended upon its own powers of observation, and of deduction. The true leaders of mankind, it assures us—those whose judgments of the world of tomorrow may be taken as the most probable of any that might be assembled—are scientists, statisticians, industrial leaders. They are such men as: William F. Ogburn, chairman of President Hoover's Commission on Social Trends; Dr. W. J. Mayo, "leader in American medicine"; Henry Ford, "industrial experimenter"; Robert A. Millikan, physicist, "measurer of the electron's charge"; A. H. Compton, "Nobel prize winner, who proved that X-rays are like corpuscles"; Michael Pupin, "distinguished for his work in electrical communications"; Sir

Arthur Keith, anthropologist; and W. R. Whitney, "dean of American directors of industrial research." Einstein, strangely enough, does not appear. Nor do such professional prophets as H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw. But not even the Times, spacious as are its columns, could include more than a few of the innumerable leaders of the world thought of today. In offering us the particular group named above, perhaps it was the intention of the Times, in keeping with its well-established editorial policy of moderation, to avoid fantastic or perfervid visions of future humanity, such as Shaw's "Superman," or Wells's dream of universal Socialism, and give only a moderate, realizable picture, a reasonable projection into the future of facts clearly visible now. All those asked to contribute to the symposium are practical workers, not abstract philosophers, creative artists; still less are they leaders of religion.

The world they conjure up for us will be, in the main, so far as we can compose a complete picture from the various visions presented, a world in which mechanism, and test tubes, and perfected statistical science, together with improved medicine, and, of course, greatly improved "world-wide education," will

banish poverty, and "hunger as a driving force of revolution will not be a danger." This last is predicted by Mr. Ogburn, the chairman of the President's Commission on Social Trends, and if he is not in a position to make such a prophecy, who is? For, according to Dr. Millikan, "the spread of the scientific method, which has been so profoundly significant for physics, to the solution of our social problems is almost sure to come. The enormous possibilities inherent in the extension of that method, especially to governmental problems, has already apparently been grasped by Hoover as by no man who has heretofore presided over our national destinies, and I anticipate great advances from moving in the direction in which he is now leading."

And of all the President's many commissions based upon scientific methods, unquestionably the Commission on Social Trends is the most fundamental. Which makes it more interesting than if it were only Mr. Ogburn's personal opinion, to read what he says in regard to the future, in which "the principle of expediency will be the dominating one in law and ethics." He finds one other place for a mention of religion, however, for he says that "the test tube or injection will hardly solve the problem of conduct which religion has so long sought to solve." Dr. Mayo also grants at least a minor part to religion in the world of eighty years hence. Although medicine will probably succeed in raising the average lifetime of civilized man "to the biblical term of three-score and ten," and other great blessings will be bestowed by science, "our emotions will predominate when crises beyond human understanding confront us, and some form of religion will continue to sustain people in time of stress."

None of the other prophets mention the subject. No doubt, they were not asked to do so, for the list of inventions given by the *Times* on its symposium page, indicates that it had in mind chiefly the physical changes and events of the last eighty years as a basis for the visions of the coming age. Therefore, not the least imputation of a deliberate ignoring of the subject of religion can justly be made against the *Times* or its contributors. Yet that fact in itself is of vast significance. That the greatest of all newspapers, and so eminent a group of the world's leaders, can look upon the last eighty years of scientific invention, and forward to an indefinite continuation of the process—without being shocked by the one-sided character of mankind's achievements in that period, and appalled by the thought of its further development of that suicidal tendency—this is an eloquent sign of the exile of religion as a vital, as the supreme, value from the councils of those who rule our world today.

Yet in that dark fact there is also a hopeful meaning. Even if the leaders of secular thought are still blind, their disillusioned and bewildered followers are awakening to their lost condition. They were led to desert the Church of God at the beginning of the modern era of

pride and self-sufficiency; but the Church did not desert them. She remembers that her Founder was the Son of Man as well as the Son of God, and that He was first of all things while on earth the friend of the poor, of the sick, of the erring. And modern men, in particular their leaders, when devoid of religion, are of all men the poorest, the sickest and the most erring. So the Church of Christ returns from exile and advances toward her prodigal children with healing in her hands.

WEEK BY WEEK

FATE has made the proposed Austrian customs' union an idea of sovereign importance. First, it was abandoned before the World Court had reached a decision, because all usefulness it may have possessed as a German diplomatic act was plainly at an end. When Chancellor Bruening went to Paris during the somber days of his country's financial collapse, he definitely turned his back upon all notions that credit could be strengthened by resistance. That decision may have exacted an effort of even so realistic a mind; but once reached, the program of which the customs' union formed a part ceased to have more than a theoretical interest. It is now definitely up to France either to urge some form of European coöperation which other countries can accept, not merely because they have to but because it is to their advantage, or to await the formation of a larger and more determined bloc of opposition. Quite different was the attitude taken by the World Court. With one notable exception—Italy—the jurists who voted adversely did not question the legality of the issue but summarized the political status of the present and then found the customs' union anomalous. And Italy did not go beyond an attempt to safeguard her interests as outlined by the Treaty of St. Germain against possible encroachments.

THE MERE fact that the decision was reached by so close a vote, with the United States and Great Britain endorsing the proposal from the juridical point of view, means that the World Court is still a political instrument the forces aligned in which are not free to base decisions on theoretical grounds. This is not, however, a reason for discouragement, any more than the one-sidedness of the League Council is necessarily a sad commentary on international helplessness. Both institutions now function primarily as diagnosticians. They help to reveal what political forces are really in alignment—and willy-nilly they do test those forces by principles of law. The whole world now knows that the Austro-German pact had violated no rule. But it also realizes—what the previous agreement to abandon the project had made clear—that under existing conditions no such pact is feasible. In the long run, the diagnosticians may be able to assert, with greater

emphasis, that settlements will be more nearly right in practice when they are correct in theory. On this point our hopes for the future converge.

MUCH has been written about events in Spain during past weeks, and it is evident that the sensation of astonishment which followed the outbreak of the revolution is giving way to a feeling that the movement has been inevitable. But how far will it go?

Conservative
Spain

One fact, noted by various observers, is that the existing government is essentially the same as its predecessor. Catholics have recognized and endorsed it; and even the Socialists, who in Spain have really been trade unionists, seem first of all anxious to prevent disorder. Possibly the most impressive fact, however, is that the new rulers have used ultra-conservative military officers in putting down agitators. In the opinion of several foreign observers this last fact is sufficient to indicate that, for the time being at least, Spain is in no danger of radical change. Its supreme problem is agrarian reform. The same matter which has so profoundly disturbed Mexico during recent years, bids fair to become the supreme issue in the land of the hidalgos. How to disperse the vast landed estates, and how to secure for the peasant population some larger measure of decent subsistence, without on the other hand destroying the whole social order of the nation, is an exceedingly difficult and stirring problem. It, too, deeply affects the position of the Church, which as a great owner of properties either faces the necessity of meeting social demands long ignored or confronts the possibility of losing all contact with the masses.

THE NEWEST case of federal optimism is the announcement of Surgeon-General Cumming, chief of the Public Health Service, that the economic situation "seems to have had no general adverse effect on health and mortality rates." This was challenged almost immediately by Homer Wicken-

Health and
Unemploy-
ment

den, general director of the United Hospital Fund, who produced facts based on a survey of 141 hospitals in New York City. Such a survey is of quite sufficient scope not to be distorted by local peculiarities, and New York is far from being one of the centers most severely affected by the depression either in the number of unemployed or in poverty of resources with which to cope with distress. The survey covered four years in which there was a maximum annual increase in population of 2 percent, whereas in 1928 there was a 3.3 percent increase in hospital patients over the year before, in 1929 a 5.3 percent increase, and in 1930 a 6.3 percent increase. The number of visitors to the dispensaries increased in 1928 by 8.4 percent, in 1929 by 10.1 percent, and in 1930 by 12.7 percent. Dr. Mark L. Fleming, General Medical Supervisor of Municipal Hospitals, reports that while detailed figures for the

present year are not available, "the municipal hospitals are overflowing and the visits to out-patient departments has increased up to August 1 last by 25 percent over the corresponding seven months of 1930." These things are not cited as causes for calamity howling, but as facts which should be faced: first, so that hospitals which are having extra burdens placed upon them, shall not suffer in the general rush for available charitable funds at the present time; and second, so that the facts may be estimated as part of the social burden in suffering, in loss of applied human energy, and in hard cash which the present flaws in social organization impose on everyone, the capitalist included, and as regards hard cash, on the capitalist first of all.

MOST of us agree perforce with the anonymous woman writer in *Harper's* who says that throughout America, and especially in the cities, the old social groups are in the last stage of deliquescence. They have yielded to a multitude of factors, which she lists: the speedy making and unmaking of fortunes—which, deny it who will, are the first basis of social power; the widened range of personal movement for which the motor is responsible; the impossibility of organic social contacts in city apartment life; and, whether one puts it first or last, the tradition of social liberty and experiment. Increasing numbers, especially of the college-bred, are unwilling to commit themselves to any one group, fearing boredom, restriction, the tyranny of convention. In the ensuing lapse of the social bond, as the writer points out, an urgent problem is now seen to arise in connection with the children. They are beginning to pay for the abnormal fluidity of society, or for their parents' happy anarchy, in one of two ways. Either they form no secure connections, and grow up rootless and socially unorientated; or they develop a whole congeries of associations—in school, in club, in camp—within which their real life is lived, and with which their parents have nothing to do. It needs no prophet to foretell that this state of things, which increasingly affects all classes, cannot last. But how if it results, not in some final debacle, as one tends to fear, but in a sharp reaction in favor of bourgeois conventions, tight groups and security?

Will the
Intelligentsia
Do It?

IT IS especially interesting in the *Harper's* writer that she sees such a reaction already well begun, and not among the Victorian die-hards, but rather markedly among the libertarians themselves. Her own outlook and program, typical of many of the moderately radical, envisage definitely the doing of something positive and deliberate to restrict stimuli and slow down life to the pace which a family can take together. Move to the suburbs, she says, and become permanently suburban, in the full connotation of that word, if need be; or, if you can, select a summer colony and go there every year for life, thus forming the stable relations which make a normal background for children. Her

clinging illustration of what can be done is as amusing as one hopes it is significant. She traces the history of a radical community here in the East over the last decade. Beginning as "a collection of charming bohemians . . . known with some justice as a 'free love' colony," in which "such children as there were played helter skelter all over the place," it has developed, under the pressure of the children's needs, into "a community of happily married, domestic couples, most of them with fairly large families. . . . They used to be decidedly frowned on by the local authorities; now they are respected and drawn into the community activities wherever possible." Most eloquent of all, in taking in new members, they seek "the type that, while liberal in ideas, is not in practice likely to disturb the very pleasant family balance . . . established in that community." Of course, such a clean-cut reversal is extreme. Not everyone can live in colonies, and not every colony will follow its impulse of healthy development so single-mindedly. But if the *Harper's* writer is right, and the phenomenon, though extreme, is characteristic, we shall have considerably more occasion to be grateful to the intelligentsia in the future than we have had in the past. If they are proceeding to order from chaos, founding a salutary decorum where the habit has too often been self-indulgence and the religion irresponsibility, above all, if they are discovering, albeit through natural avenues, the immemorial Catholic truth that the family is a unit and must live as one, we can call them intelligent without irony.

A RATHER startling confirmation of something that has been observed and often discussed in general terms, was yielded by one of the latest disclosures of the census bureau. Succinctly, this was that in 1920 there were of persons over twenty-one years attending schools 344,749, while ten years later, that is last year, there were 1,034,782. We were more or less familiar with the fact that the increase in the numbers of young Americans going to college was phenomenal, but the actuality of this increase in the short space of the last decade is beyond our most sanguine estimate. We do not know whether to cheer, or to pause and reflect. Is higher education of the rank and file of a democracy being served, or is campus ballyhoo just packing them in in heavily subsidized and endowed recreational barracks and parks where the luxury of an artificial leisure and freedom from responsibility has a more lasting influence than a smattering of unassorted information? Judging by the movies and popular magazine fiction, petting, raccoon coats, football and automobiling are the distinguishing achievements of American college life. Personal observation leads us to believe, however, that this is a caricature rather than a truly proportioned picture. The average American student is earnest, with that natural crusading earnestness of youth. If he is bewildered and bemused, so are to a great extent "the

best minds" of our times. If he seems to think that the world owes him a living, and a pretty good one at that, because he is a college man, this attitude is largely traceable to the ballyhoo which has pictured college education as the entrance to a socially and intellectually favored class. Education, like science, has been the white hope for a heaven on earth for the last half-century, but the fact that life is still very much with us and with our college graduates, is no cause for despair, but for a new valuation of the desirable ends to be achieved by study.

IN LINE with the contention of Mr. Morrow Mayo that crime is overpublicized in the modern press, we take occasion to renew a particular protest of our own. It has to do with the playing up of vicious and depraved crimes in a way which inevitably brutalizes the general imagination, and beyond doubt acts as a baneful stimulus to certain abnormal readers. The tabloids are the usual offenders, and in a recent case, a leading tabloid went far enough, we think, to challenge decent opinion everywhere. A series of murders of what are called the "Bluebeard" type were discovered. They had been committed with a callous premeditation which at least invites pathological diagnosis, and the other enhancing circumstances invariable to such crimes were not lacking. In short, whatever may be feasible or allowable to newspapers in ordinary cases, this was a case for reticence and brevity. The tabloid in question (we single it out not because it sinned alone, but because it is edited with an intelligence which supports the conviction that it knows better) utilized all of this matter, hovered over it, warmed it up when it was cold and garnished it to, we should think, the last legal limit. It not only published a full news story. It ran photographs of the murderer bearing the signs of police manhandling, with captions comparing these marks with those he had left on his victims; photographs of the crime cellar with details of what was done there; photographs of the murderer being confronted by the sister of one of his victims. The excesses of the saloon made prohibition possible. If we are all presently fuming under an arbitrary press censorship, it will be because of performances like this.

WHAT happens when a bishop goes about Bengal is charmingly related in the following missionary letter, which we cull from the *Bengalese Tin Horn*: "Last Sunday Bishop Crowley visited us, and Garos from three villages received confirmation. In order to attract the neighboring pagan Garos magic lantern pictures of the life of Saint Tarcisus and of the catechism were shown. This display might have been left out of the program if it had been known how great an attraction the bishop himself was. The bishop was surrounded by these simple people from the time

Morbid
Publicity

Whither
Students?

Jungle
Visitation

he got up in the morning until late in the night. Some were there to learn whether the bishop would not move up the day of their baptism by several months, others wanted advice about domestic or land difficulties, one old dame (the head of a clan of Baptist Garos) came to discuss theology, still others and in considerable number came for medicine, and a few for an alms. With the sick and the diseased His Lordship was especially attentive and kind and he won the hearts of all. I shall never forget the sight of the bishop in a kneeling posture, first cleaning and bathing the wounded foot of a tiny Garo boy and then applying medicine and bandage. According to his custom the bishop had brought along a large handkerchief chuck full of bottles and tubes of remedies for everything from malaria to chicken-pox. Needless to say the Garos of Gacchabari and Malajani sections were much better off spiritually and corporally for the bishop's visit. Even as he was leaving, a troop of children skipped along behind shouting familiarly, as Garo youngsters do, 'When are you coming back again? May we go along with you?'

"WHAT a life! Age 5 decides to have a baby / Age 7 her first big drunk / Age 11 falls in love / Age 16 ambulance driver in France / Age 18 married—and widowed— / Age 20 behind the footlights, and Men, Men, Men! 'Merrily I Go to Hell: Reminiscences of a Bishop's Daughter,' by Lady Mary Cameron. \$3.00." So runs a large advertisement in the *New York Times Book Review* with such explicitness that one does not have to read the book to know what it has to offer, unless one is afflicted with the peculiar and pitiful private vice of actually enjoying sordid details. Here we are not inclined to remonstrate with a reputable journal for holding out this temptation for feeble minds to do themselves irreparable hurt. We only pause to wonder that, even before the depression, there should be any wonder that suicide and insanity were so on the increase. The thing we quote is exceptional only in degree. On the same page are touted "Ladies of the Evening: The Intimate Story of Two of Them"; and "Love Goes Past," by the author of "Ex-wife" and "Strangers May Kiss." Facing, is "One Must Love" by the author of "Joyous Betrayal." We have no inclination to print a lay sermon against this sort of thing. But knowing that the minds that feed on it by a process of progressive deterioration are reduced to being unable to savor or appreciate anything else and beget that strange involution and perversity which has only scorn for the virtues, ethical, moral or religious, we wonder how such minds may be penetrated by compensating, equal and opposite, ideas for their own salvation. In this dilemma it is that we sometimes see darkly a logical pattern to evil in life: where it does not kill, it is self-sterilizing. Despair is not necessarily, but is often, the prelude to a feeble but struggling wisdom, the longest way around.

TURKEY IN THE STRAW

RETURNING from abroad, Secretary of State Stimson proved himself once more the administration's most devoted cog. "Very hopeful—very encouraging!" he announced. The crisis is past, storm clouds have blown over, flowers will bloom in the spring, tra-la. Taken at face value the Stimson interview meant that as a result of the Hoover moratorium and the seven-power conference, economic and political problems are well on the way to a solution. And the point is that they are not. It would be ridiculous to discount the good work done in Europe by the Secretary, or to deny that the world took on a new lease of life by reason of active American interest in its troubles. But it would be equally unwise not to take alarm at the cheerful note now warbled by all Washington in a dull monotone.

Does the White House know where the drift has taken us? And if it knows—for the hypothesis of ignorance lacks probability—how shall we account for the continuous application of soft soap? Were Mr. Hoover the kind of engineer whose life-work had consisted of shouting such admonitions as, "Now all together, boys. Push!" (or something to that effect), one could easily explain his present methods. But this man has traveled widely, has held important jobs, has added up columns of dollars and cents. Of course no equipment of personality and experience could have produced a President able to dispel the existing depression, or restore jobs to six million people. What one cannot fathom, however, is the practice which keeps on issuing cheer rations to an army in utter rout.

That rout has not been checked. There is no justification whatsoever for supposing that business has fallen back to a position where realignment is possible. This position would have to be a stabilized price level. Granted that maintaining the advances registered during the four years after 1924 was and is impossible, those advantages having been gained in part by foolhardy adventures, it remains the duty of economic leadership to make for a lower level which can be held. But how get there? The answer is simple: Either the United States will supply this leadership or it will not be available. To advance reasons for this assertion is likewise easy. New York and Paris virtually divide between them the world's basic currency. This gold is the only form of capital which is not subject to fluctuation in value, at least while the gold standard remains in force. Every other kind of wealth, whether invested in productive enterprise or not, is contingent upon rapid inflation or deflation. The function of gold is, therefore, to regulate current values as a whole.

This function was pretty well realized during the years of prosperity. Largely by reason of the promising if erroneous solution of the German-European problem through the Dawes Plan, money was pressed into service with surprising optimism. Little by little the worth of all securities rose to heights which

had never before been reached. Wages mounted and with them the demand for goods. It seemed as if a golden age had dawned, when production and consumption were engaged in a dizzy sparring match for a supremacy, without impairing the chances for the economic sine qua non of capital building. But this optimism did not merely rest on an insecure foundation. It was pushed to extremes comparable to those which have prevailed in boom towns, where flush prospectors lit cigars with a twenty-dollar bill.

We are not in a position to outline the history of the nation's money—more specifically of the discount rate of the Federal Reserve Bank—during the critical years of 1928 and 1929. During the first year this rate was kept low, despite the fact that the financial world generally was fully aware of impending drastic changes in the Dawes Plan, with the result that market speculation in commodities and securities broke through all bounds. If this failure to act was occasioned by political desires to keep business booming during an election year, then of course the men responsible for this criminal action deserve the same treatment meted out to the flunkies of Teapot Dome. But no scrutiny of these motives has as yet been possible. What we do know is that during the following year a too drastic correction of the rate, in a vain endeavor to halt the speculative tide, was more than anything else responsible for the crash. To be sure that crash would have been less calamitous if the assumptions upon which prosperity rested had been sounder. Yet, even so, the steps taken by the Federal Reserve Bank during 1929 have long since been accepted by leading economists throughout the world as the immediate fatal moves.

At present, of course, the world's credit structure is so badly impaired that such an agency as the discount rate cannot immediately be applied to the productive mechanism. What we need is some more fundamental action; and immediately the thought of a parallel to the Dawes Plan suggests itself. And why? Too many people's conception of wealth is purely static. Wealth is to them something they have, some form of currency or property. But it is obvious that under modern conditions at least, wealth must also earn. If we lived in a primitive society by bartering labor for goods, or one thing for another, this necessity for earning would not be so immediate. But we pay for things with money, and eventually money is earned by wealth. Not the hardest working nation on earth, for instance, can earn what it wants by labor alone; it needs the technique of productive and market enterprise as well. Thus a farmer who has 200 acres on which 5,000 bushels of wheat grow may none the less turn out to be poor, if not enough money has been earned to pay for his wheat at a figure which in turn will permit him to earn something.

That is why the Dawes Plan was a great send-off. It enabled a large amount of otherwise frozen American money to earn a handsome profit, and in turn it enabled the Germans to build up a technique by which

they, too, could earn enough to live by. Even so that plan was soon proved fallacious, because it was relied upon not merely to pay interest on an investment in the productive present, but also to pay back capital poured into a destructive past. This could not be done. What happened was that new capital was imported into Germany to replace the reimbursements to America in the form of reparations. The eventual result—that American money would earn less in Germany under greater risks—became clear. Thereupon the Dawes Plan was abandoned, and we sailed right into a political and economic crisis.

Present improvement must be a solution of that crisis. This solution cannot be the Dawes Plan, already abandoned, nor the Young Plan, which was merely a formula stating the fact that the Dawes era was over. It cannot, we think, be any arrangement which hopes to salvage wealth from the war, for the reason that this wealth has already been indirectly diverted to the United States. So much having been granted, the moratorium applied to war indebtedness by Mr. Hoover becomes a simple and reasonable step. But a one-year moratorium has no practical meaning apart from the immediate financial load it takes from German industry. It has no bearing upon political or credit forces, excepting in so far as it has been accepted as an omen of further achievement.

On the other hand, political and credit forces themselves have a lot to do with such international acts as a moratorium. For example, very many citizens are still thinking of war debts in terms of so many dollars due the American taxpayer. They suppose that this country can restore prosperity by gathering in as much money as possible and then distributing it. Against such economic fallacies even earnest leaders can make progress slowly if at all. And it is impossible to advance while the government clings to its Pollyanna tactics. If Mr. Hoover's administration had started telling the truth two years ago and had kept it up bravely, in spite of possible political difficulties, we should be considerably farther out of the woods than we are now. The American people should be told that prosperity is out of the question until the commodity level is at least stabilized, and that this or any more marked improvement is absolutely dependent upon the international earning power of money. We have to export credit and think of it in terms of the present.

The practical conclusion from all this is a ten-year moratorium on all war indebtedness. To seek more is politically out of the question; to be content with less is futility. If the President does not know this, it is high time everybody who does should break the news to him as vigorously as possible. If he is aware of it and afraid to act, there is no way out but to seek to elect another man. The perennial, reckless humming of "Turkey in the Straw" will not fatten a single turkey for Thanksgiving. Mr. Hoover should realize that the soft soap so much in evidence will prove to be his real campaign oratory.

THIS MAN BRUENING

By MAX JORDAN

TWICE during the past few weeks the American radio audience has heard the voice of the German Chancellor carried over the ocean through the medium of international broadcasting. At the same time millions of Germans listened in to the words of their political leader. Thousands bought new radio sets solely for the purpose of hearing Dr. Bruening. The people trust their chancellor because they know that he tells them the full truth, even if it is unpleasant. That is why his words carry greater weight in these times of distress than those of any public speaker. This man Bruening has become a symbol of Germany, her man of destiny, and will perhaps be her savior.

This writer met Dr. Heinrich Bruening for the first time eight years ago. Then he was an unpretentious young man engaged in the management of the Catholic Federation of Labor. Among a group of Catholics who had gathered at the house of Professor Romano Guardini, the eminent philosopher and theologian, Bruening sat as a silent observer, listening to what the others had to say. He spoke only a few words himself and seemed to find his profit in being the best listener. The other day, when I saw him again at the chancery in the Wilhelmstrasse, he recalled that informal meeting:

"Those were happy days," he said. "It is long since I have seen Professor Guardini. You know how it is with the burden of this office. . . ."

Indeed, what a burden it is! It has been said that today Bruening, MacDonald, Mussolini and Stalin are the most outstanding statesmen of Europe, the men who carry the heaviest burdens. Among them Bruening has had to shoulder the most ungrateful of tasks: to lead his nation back to normalcy after a war which was one almost of extermination for the vanquished, after the economic debacle which came in its wake and after that terrific setback of the last elections which completely upset the inner equilibrium of the German people.

Who is the man who tackles so herculean a task? Many, when they see him for the first time, think that he is a priest, so serious and meditative is the expression of his face. But in reality he has never come very close to theology. His family is of the best Catholic stock in Westphalia, and his mother is said to have been a devout woman who brought up her three children in true observance of the teachings of the Church. But only Heinrich's brother, Hermann, became a priest. Seven years ago he died as a Monsignor in America where he had devoted himself to the German children's relief work during a most critical period, after having done missionary work overseas. Heinrich Bruening is indebted to this elder brother for guidance and advice from his tender years on. The father who

had been a vine merchant in Muenster died when Heinrich was not two years old.

The boy grew up in the conservative atmosphere of that classical center of Westphalian Catholicism, and having finished high school he decided to study law. Soon, however, his major interests converged upon philosophy and history. Having become a freshman in 1904, it was seven years before he submitted to his first examination in philology. He felt no hurry in reaching a definite professional goal. Independently from official curricula he tried to get acquainted with as many disciplines as possible. Judging from his devotion to bookwork, one might have expected that some day young Bruening would become a scholar and great teacher, keeping away from the world and as much in the background of events as he possibly could. One or two trips to France and England widened his horizon—and then came the war.

Barely could Heinrich Bruening complete his thesis for the doctorate of economics. Immediately afterward he enlisted as a volunteer in a regiment of infantry. A few months later he was wounded at the front and soon his bravery earned him the promotion to the rank of lieutenant.

When the war was over Dr. Bruening had become a new man. In an article of his published some years later he wrote:

The experience of the war strengthens, with those who have participated in great and at the same time terrible events, the knowledge that the great destinies in this world can only be mastered through sacrifice, self-denial and voluntary discipline.

Bruening came home from the war with his Christian faith confirmed and his soul full of the determination to devote his whole strength to the service of his country.

Carl Sonnenschein, that great priest whose apostolate in the German metropolis has left an unforgettable mark on the life of a whole generation of Catholics, became Bruening's guide and master. The two men had met before the war in that field of Catholic action whose center is the *Volksverein* of München-Gladbach. Now Bruening was offered the opportunity of an apprenticeship in Sonnenschein's workshop of social endeavor. He found his way to the young generation which was in urgent need of Christian leadership in the midst of the chaotic conditions of the aftermath of the war. He saw the distress and misery of the masses, the helplessness of the poor. The few months he spent in Sonnenschein's social laboratory paved the way for Bruening's supreme calling.

In the summer of 1919 Sonnenschein recommended him to Adam Stegerwald, who was then member of

the Prussian Cabinet in charge of public welfare work. As Stegerwald's private secretary, Bruening started his political career. It was in the field of trade-unionism that his abilities as a leader were put to a decisive test. When Stegerwald, two years later, was appointed Prime Minister of the state of Prussia, Bruening took over the management of the German League of Trade Unions which had been established on a Catholic basis, but was meant at the same time to unite labor beyond party and church limitations and to build up a consciousness of Christian faith and national solidarity among the working classes.

For three consecutive years Dr. Bruening devoted himself body and soul to his new task. He grew with it, became acquainted with political tactics and was one of the outstanding experts in the field of social welfare work. With all this he kept himself in the background so successfully that his standing was only known to a limited group of coworkers and intimate friends. To the public at large it was a surprise when Stegerwald had him appointed as a Center Party candidate for the Reichstag from the Breslau district. Thus Bruening became a full-fledged politician.

He was elected in the autumn of 1924 and soon concentrated all his energies on financial and economic problems. Five years later he was elected chairman of the Centrists in the Reichstag. Monsignor Kaas, the outstanding leader of German political Catholicism, had pushed him to the front because, as he said,

he had discovered in him a synthesis between thought and action as it perhaps is only to be found among the statesmen of the ancient Greek.

It was also Monsignor Kaas who suggested Bruening to President von Hindenburg as chief of the Cabinet when, in March of last year, the Hermann Mueller government succumbed to the rising tide of the economic crisis.

Since then Bruening and Hindenburg are the two names which symbolize Germany. The field marshal, at eighty-three, and the chancellor, at forty-five years of age, have become a bulwark between order and chaos for the whole country. These two men believe both in self-discipline and in discipline for the nation. Upon their strong shoulders rests the destiny of the country.

Ruediger Robert Beer, who has just published the first biographical summary of Dr. Bruening's career, describes the chancellor's will power as the backbone of his personality. Thus we understand how the chancellor could write, long before being raised to his present high office, that

the public will gain faith in the sincerity of a statesman only if it is convinced that the man in question is in a position to carry his self-denial and his self-sacrifice in the interest of the community to the very extreme.

In small things, too, his biographer tells us, Dr. Bruening lives up to his teachings. He refuses to use

the official motor car of the chancery when he goes out on personal errands, but hires a public taxicab at his own expense rather than impose upon the taxpayer even in such minor outlays. When he was still manager of the Trade Union's League, a bill was adopted in the Reichstag to raise the salaries of public service employees. Dr. Bruening would indirectly have been one of the beneficiaries of the measure. But (like Senator Borah in a similar instance), having voted against the bill, he did not hesitate to insist that his own salary should remain unchanged.

As to his much talked of bachelorship, his friends have long ago given up their well-meant suggestions. Dr. Bruening always has the ready reply at hand that he is too busy to get married! However, he is not yet forty-six years old, so one might still hope that he may change his mind.

Anyone who met Dr. Bruening during the last few weeks, which probably excelled all previous records for hectic excitement, was impressed with his equanimity. He always keeps his temper, and in the most critical moments his sobriety and undefatigable energy have greatly helped to restore confidence. This is spite of the chancellor's innate scepticism. It seems that he is never carried away by his own enthusiasm, but is inclined rather to doubt his own counsels than to abandon himself to vague hopes and the fallacies of political theorists. Hard work is essential to him, and he expects results only from tenacity of purpose and the untiring expense of his own energies.

"The New Iron Chancellor," he has been called by some. "The best since Bismarck," say others. But the most pungent characterization is the one his biographer attributes to a foreign diplomat who stated simply: "He is a mixture of a cardinal and an officer of the Prussian army." His Catholic faith and his soldierly sense of duty make Dr. Bruening the prototype of a modern statesman with the best political traditions of his country. Under such leadership Germany can well look forward to a better future.

The Dulse-gatherers: Bay of Fundy

The windows of the tide are open
And through them swirls pell-mell the thunder.
Home the dulse-gatherers stagger under
Dead weight of tangled ribbon-tresses.
Have they been down to plunder
Some wave-deep fortress, long bronze banquet-hall
With flagons of bronze and grapes in a granite dish
And places set with savage platters all
Heavy with skewered fish?
And where was the lord of the hall? And who is he?
And does he laugh when the strong tide turns and
pours
The mottled mackerel-flame along his floors?

While Fundy combs the seaweed wildernesses,
Down in the ooze where legends come to be,
What dark god waits, I wonder?

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING.

THE FARMER'S SANTA CLAUS

By ERNEST A. DEWEY

IN MEDIAEVAL times the peasant plowman was the popular epitome of dullness and stupidity. Heir, perhaps, to that ancestral contempt, the American farmer long has been the favorite butt of sarcastic provincial wit, and he has resented it. The essential differences between the country and the city have served further to alienate the farmer from his fellow occupants of these United States. Differences in customs, standards of conduct and economic conditions have constituted barriers not always slight to understanding and tolerance. Regarding the cities with an eye of suspicion, the rural population smote them with the jawbone of the ass of prohibition in a vain effort to make them conform to rural Methodism's concepts of conduct. In the early 1890s the farmer's suspicion of the city was expressed in his hatred of Wall Street—the favorite bloody shirt waved by the Populists. Conversely, the city-dweller's contempt for the agrarian population, its social and moral standards, its mode of life and its attempts to force conformity to those standards by law, has been expressed most commonly by the casually derisive way he speaks of it.

Even in the halls of government the farmer feels that he sits down only in the presence of his enemies. Industrial lobbies in Washington seem to him always to get what they want while continually he is being told he wants something other than what he is asking for—something he is quite sure he doesn't want but will have to take or get nothing at all. Industry and large business seem always to secure the maximum of protection for finished products while at the same time fending off the producer in order to secure his raw material at low cost. Thus the cotton planter, the sheep raiser, the stockman, the wheat grower—farmers all—are arrayed against the industries which use what they produce. The farmer feels he is at war with everybody. It is a condition made to order for the insincere politician and the demagogue. The farmer has been made to feel that the politician, with his perennial promises, is his only friend. Capitalizing his provincial distrust and pandering to his belief in legal panaceas for moral and economic ills (prohibition again is the classic example), the politician has nurtured in the farmer a pathetic faith in a governmental Santa Claus. The farmer has been taught that the solution of his troubles lies outside himself, that the return of prosperity to agriculture only awaits the passage of some miraculous law. Hence the attention of practically every farm

Wheat and politics are staple products of the Middle West, and both flourish especially well in Kansas. Under present circumstances the relation between the two is close and significant. Mr. Dewey, a grain-belt editor, has therefore summarized for us the most important aspects of a situation which may put the United States back, politically speaking, to the era of the nineties. But with a difference. Wherein this change lies and what import it holds can be deduced from the fact that "the politician has nurtured in the farmer a pathetic faith in a governmental Santa Claus."—The Editors.

organization constantly has been directed to getting outside help for the farmer in the form of legislation, rather than teaching the farmer to help himself.

In the fall of 1928 the farmer voted enthusiastically for Santa Claus, this time in the guise of Mr. Hoover and his promises of prosperity.

When this prosperity mysteriously absented itself the rural voting contingent was encouraged to feel that there had been some mistake which would shortly be rectified by the political magicians. There still remained a degree of confidence in those talismans of the Republican crusade—the portraits of Herbert Hoover with the words "Vote for Continued Prosperity" printed boldly beneath his chubby countenance. When the agricultural marketing act was passed by Congress and the Federal Farm Board was created, the farmer believed that his patient faith in a governmental Santa Claus had been rewarded. When that board made the announcement that the price of wheat would be "stabilized" at \$1.13, huzzas were in order and were duly emitted. Predictions were freely made that wheat would be selling at \$1.50 in another month. But alas for Santa Claus and Mr. Hoover! Wheat prices began to think.

Consternation reigned as, logically at first, then careening crazily, the market began to slide. The Farm Board held on doggedly at \$1.13, but the bludgeonings at last were too much for it and it withdrew from the market, counted its bruises and plunged in again in an attempt to hold the market to a price level ranging around \$.67. Its success was nothing to brag about. The market continued its wabbling tour into the lower regions. Meantime the naively trusting farmer had gone out, plowed, planted and harvested another crop, supremely confident that the government was taking care of him. And with 200,000,000 bushels of wheat purchased, owned and withdrawn from the market by the Farm Board—the equivalent of one year's exportable surplus for the entire United States—wheat went bumping down the scale of prices to \$.25.

To the grain belt \$.25 wheat is a calamity. Even the most efficient owner-farmer, operating under the most favorable of circumstances, cannot produce grain at a profit at so low a price. For the average farmer, who has become a renter of all or most of the land he farms, it is nothing short of an economic nightmare. One-third of his crop must be sold to pay the landlord his crop-rent. After the cost of plowing, planting, reaping and binning or hauling to market are deducted from

the sale price, the net result in almost every case must be written in red ink.

Let us consider a few figures. The average yield for the great wheat-producing counties of Kansas this year was sixteen bushels; a much higher average than usual, hence much more favorable to the raising of wheat at a profit. Sixteen bushels of wheat at \$.25 per bushel equal a return of \$4.00 per acre. Let us now consider the average cost of production for the current year as figured by farm agents. Cost of plowing is given as \$1.50 per acre. Seed wheat for the present crop was purchased at an average cost of \$.65 per acre. Harrowing and drilling, if performed as a single operation—both machines drawn across the field at the same time by one tractor—add another \$.65. Cost of harvesting the grain this season averages \$2.25 per acre, and usually it is much higher. This makes a total expense of \$5.05 per acre to grow and harvest \$4.00 worth of wheat. Already there is a loss of \$1.05 per acre, and the costs of hauling to market or bin have not been figured. The farmer is that much “in the red” before the wheat leaves his field. These are conservative figures for I am informed that in many cases production costs approach \$6.50 to \$6.85 per acre. (The Department of Agricultural Economics, Kansas State Agricultural College, gives production costs in 1930 as \$7.56 to \$7.74 per acre.) Another element destructive to his cheerfulness is the fact that banks, machinery companies and other creditors of the farmer are pressing him for payment. Many of these debts were contracted in previous years when wheat was selling as high as \$1.15 and the farmer was following the advice of politicians to hold his wheat for higher prices.

No alarmist needs exaggerate the fact that the farm belt is in ferment. Wheat for \$.25, eggs for \$.11, oats for \$.12 and similar quotations for nearly all farm produce have brought a change in the farmer. Country stores, the meeting place of farmers from time immemorial, are not strangers to groups of muttering men at plowing time while acres lie fallow, not because of agreement with the Farm Board's policy of acreage reduction, but because the farmer feels the uselessness of effort in face of present prices—which is a vastly different thing. The Job-like patience of the farmer is beginning to evaporate. He has become sulky, and there is menace in his sudden flashes of volatility. He is losing his faith in politicians. He is beginning to realize that there is for him no governmental Santa Claus and he is growing bitter about it. He may not be content with writing letters to the newspapers denouncing the current Republican administration and, in street corner conversation, disposing of Mr. Hoover and the Farm Board in sulphurous language. Reasonable or not, he feels that the Farm Board has betrayed him: first, by its failure to stabilize prices and, second, because of the refusal of the board to keep its entire holdings off the market until the price is \$.80 or more. It is felt that this refusal has served to prevent rising prices if not actually to depress them.

Even that staunch supporter of President Hoover, Senator Capper of Kansas, and Vice-President Curtis have joined the critics of the Farm Board in this last respect.

It is useless to point out that business and industry are suffering also, for the farmer has been taught to regard himself as under special dispensation of government. Therefore he considers that he has a special grudge against the government, as now constituted. Politics has destroyed his sense of proportion, and there is threat of a reckoning. One of the most astute political war-horses of the agricultural section remarked to me recently:

There is apt to be hell to pay in the wheat belt. I'm no longer afraid of what's going to happen in the next election. I'm only afraid we can't make 'em wait until an election!

Warren H. Hunter, chairman of the board of county commissioners of Rice County, Kansas, in a letter published in the Lyons *Daily News* of that county, makes a statement that will read strangely to those who are out of touch with conditions in the wheat belt:

The farmers at this time are crowded to the wall on all sides and are ready to grab at any straw for relief, ready to join the Bolsheviks or anything. And I am having hard work to keep myself from wanting to join them. . . . I had one man who owns his own land and is a fairly successful farmer ask me seriously not to make a single tax levy in the county, and to see to it that there were no school levies so there could not be a teacher hired or an officer in the county, and we would have to lock up the courthouse, and he wound up by saying, “The sooner the farmer starts a revolution, the better.”

Commissioner Hunter's utterance followed a meeting of several hundred farmers in that county (one of the highly productive counties of Kansas) when motions were presented to the county commissioners which, if adopted, would have resulted in virtual abolition of important branches of the county government and serious curtailment in the efficiency of county offices. So radical were the demands that Mr. Hunter characterized them as

the most convincing evidence of pure and simple ignorance and mob spirit of any action taken by any group of men in all the history of Rice County.

Yet these men were not radicals of the accepted type nor were they members of the “lunatic fringe” of hysterical voters. According to Commissioner Hunter, many of them were members of boards of education, township officials and highly reputable, solid citizens generally. It was evidently an example of the unruly spirit evoked in ordinarily peaceable people by a stinging economic lash.

On July 18, at Henryetta, Oklahoma, 150 farmers and jobless workers marched on stores and demanded money or food. Oklahoma City has reported trouble on several occasions when mobs have stormed grocery stores, crashing down doors, hurling bricks through

windows and making away with armfuls of food. There have been other outbreaks but, so far, none of them has been widespread or of a very serious nature. The farmer is usually a pacific fellow. So long as there remains one ray of hope for him he is not likely to go out looking for trouble. But, as W. G. Clugston, noted political writer of Topeka, Kansas, recently asked:

If such things can happen in the "bread basket of America" when fruits are ripe on the trees and berries on the bushes, when vegetables are green in gardens and when the grain harvest is in progress—if such things can happen at such a time, what may be expected when the bleak, cold days of winter arrive?

Even before the harvest there were instances of tenants notifying their landlords of refusal to harvest the grain. In such cases the tenant felt that prices were not sufficient for him to recover more than the cost of reaping after the landlord's third had been deducted. There were isolated instances of plowing under or burning off of fields which were too low in yield to pay expenses of harvesting. And after the harvest in Bucklin, Kansas, one disgruntled farmer loaded his truck with grain and placed placards on each side: one a very impolite cartoon of Hoover and the Farm Board; the other placard depicted a jackass and was labeled "Kansas Farmer." He drove his truck into town, opened the tail-gate and dumped his wheat upon the Bucklin streets.

There is widespread advocacy of moratoriums on the farmer's debts. In many cities merchants are accepting wheat at higher-than-market prices in exchange for clothing, groceries and dry goods. Some implement houses are offering to accept wheat at \$.50 a bushel on the purchase of new machinery, though none will accept it in payment of old debts. Movie houses are taking wheat for admissions. Even justices of the peace are performing marriages and accepting the yellow grain as fee. Wheat has come to be good for almost anything except a profit in growing it.

"Hoover Prosperity" has become the farmer's conversational symbol for politicians with empty promises. The wheat belt inhabitant has become distrustful of any pledge or maker of pledges who bears a political party label. Even last fall, before the wheat situation had become acute, Kansas gave a historic exhibition of that distrust. Dr. John R. Brinkley, a gland specialist who built a half-million dollar hospital and a radio station in a rural community, had his medical license revoked as a result of his advertising activities by the Kansas Medical Board and was debarred from the air by the Federal Radio Commission appointed by Hoover. The doctor entered the race for governor of Kansas a scant four weeks before election day as an independent candidate without his name on the ballot. His brief campaign consisted chiefly of denunciation of "dirty politics" and of newspapers which had been prominent in political affairs and a pledge to "clean house" with the politicians in Kansas. After Novem-

ber 6 it was found that 189,000 Kansas voters had written his name on their ballots properly and it was claimed that 42,000 ballots—more than enough to elect—had been improperly marked and thrown out by election judges. This amazing feat gave old-guard party politicians what is now popularly referred to as "the jitters," and their apprehensions are not lessened by the fact that Dr. Brinkley is now on a speaking tour of Kansas for some mysteriously unannounced reason and is drawing enormous crowds wherever he goes. Seventeen thousand people—his record crowd to date—gathered to hear him excoriate officials of national and state governments in El Dorado, Kansas, early in July. At Wichita he spoke to 15,000 and his smallest audiences in crossroads communities usually number a thousand or more.

Third party agitation also is growing a bit warm. This is written before August 25 when a convention is scheduled to take place in Monte Ne, Arkansas, home of "Coin" Harvey, famous expounder of the financial system once advocated in the campaigns of the late William Jennings Bryan. A. C. Townley, organizer of the Nonpartisan League which dominated North Dakota politics for a time, has been speaking in Texas and Oklahoma recently in support of Harvey's theories. Facilities have been prepared to accommodate 20,000 delegates to this "Farmers' Congress" which is expected to develop into a third party movement.

The farmer is restive and his dissatisfaction is causing no few worries for Middle Western business men and leaders of farm organizations. The teachings of political demagogues that the government owes the farmer a living and that the passage of some miraculous law is to turn the wheat belt into a Utopia, promise to bear some bitter fruit. For the present, those who are sincerely concerned in the farmer's behalf can only hope that he will be restrained by his innate common sense. It remains an open question whether or not some tiger of wrath will uprear itself upon the Middle Western horizon to herald a period infinitely more radical than the bloody-shirt Populism of the '90s.

Scarecrow

Here is man
Made of straw,
Subject to
The wind's law.

Straw tatters
Blowing, lost;
Dangling from
A wooden post.

Sticks and straw,
Flesh and bone—
None of these
Will stand alone.

MAUD E. USCHOLD.

DARING AND THE PHILOSOPHER

By JOHN K. RYAN

FUNDAMENTALLY and essentially, the intellect is an instrument by means of which men arrive at truth rather than error. Sceptics and anti-intellectualists may disparage and attack, but the race in general has confidence in the power of the human mind to arrive at sure knowledge. The anti-intellectualist must use, and must use brilliantly, the intellect which he insults so grossly in the very act of using it. The out-and-out Pyrrhonist expresses his confidence in at least his own ability to reason to a correct conclusion, while proclaiming that there are no correct conclusions in philosophy or science or, a fortiori, in any other branch of thought. It is trite and obvious, although none the less true, that there is no one more dogmatic than he who maintains vigorously that all dogma is to be rejected. To be negatively dogmatic, in fact, is far more indefensible scientifically and more pernicious philosophically than any form of positive dogmatism. Negations will never advance mankind either in thought or action, nor will mankind be long satisfied with them. Men look to their leaders for positive doctrine. As a consequence, intellectual and moral leaders of the race must possess courage and strength. Both are needed to avoid the temptation of those facile negations which are so often prompted by intellectual weakness and moral cowardice, and to pronounce those affirmations—and these must be of content as well as form—which men need and seek.

If the capacity of the intellect for attaining truth be great, its tendency to err also makes itself painfully felt. Even the most cursory glance over the history of human thought would tell us this, if every man were not conscious of it from his own bitter experience. To turn one's mind at any time upon problems that are worthy of serious reasoning, is to risk falling into error. To pursue any long and involved chain of arguments dealing with a problem that is deep and difficult, means almost inevitably that at some place or time one will be deceived by fallacies. The greatest of human thinkers have fallen into the same pit; and the more daring their intellects, the more striking some of their mistakes, even as the more glorious their achievements.

A sublime daring, an adventuring spirit, are necessary qualities in all great philosophers and all great philosophies. Saint Anselm could look at the countless stars of a French night and know that, even if there were millions of such firmaments, there must be something greater still. There must be, he knew, a greatest of all possible beings; a being so great that we can think of none greater; a being whose real existence is guaranteed by our own soaring intellect. It matters little if there is a flaw at the heart of the Anselmian argument—it remains as one of the great and audacious flights of man's reason. It is characteristic of an age

that was impatient of the limitations of time and space, and ventured far beyond them. Such an age could state and prove doctrines which the cautious and earth-bound modern finds blinding in their brilliance. That man is an intelligent and free being, destined to an everlasting life; that he is capable of deeds which will bring him an infinite reward or an infinite punishment; that dignity and sacredness are inherent in human life; that God exists, Infinite Goodness, Power and Wisdom, distinct from His vast creation but provident of it—these are daring doctrines. They are also tremendous truths, "advanced," "radical," which familiarity or unfamiliarity cannot rob of their power and beauty.

There is a humor, ironic but provocative of thought, in placing side by side the following quotations from two modern works. The first is from George Hayward Joyce's "Principles of Natural Theology," in the Stonyhurst Philosophical Series. Familiar with the philosophy of the past as well a brilliant neo-Scholastic, Father Joyce writes of the great age of Scholasticism as follows:

Every department of human thought is gathered up into one vast scheme, the conclusions of each part bearing out the results of all the others. The minds—and they were many—which labored at the work, aimed at and achieved a synthesis universal in its range. These men were not content to leave one region of being, and that the most important, unexplored. They held that, if only the right path were chosen, the peaks might be scaled. It was left for a later generation at once less sure of foot and duller of vision to aver first that the heights were unattainable, and finally that they were a mere mirage to which nothing real corresponded.

The second quotation is from Bertrand Russell's "Our Knowledge of the External World," in the Lowell Lectures for 1914:

To the Schoolmen, who lived amid wars, massacres and pestilences, nothing appeared so delightful as safety and order. In their idealizing dreams, it was safety and order that they sought: the universe of Thomas Aquinas or Dante is as small and neat as a Dutch interior.

Upon the lips of this later generation, "less sure of foot and duller of vision," such words as "daring" and "adventure," "freedom" and "vision," are frequent but almost meaningless. Courage and audacity of thought have disappeared from among the philosophers. It is to the present age that Russell's domestic figure applies; to the present also belongs that meanness of conception which he falsely imputes to Dante and Saint Thomas. A tight little world, hidden away in a universe which somehow got wound up and is somehow running down; a host of human machines without importance or value, but since they are here, due to seek

comfort and safety as the best of things; a recognition of no other gods than human needs and wants—such poor stones as these are reached to men and women who are hungry for the bread of truth.

All this has been the result of a long and persistent process of retrenchment and reduction. To belittle man has been the aim of many a modern philosopher, even while he proclaims that he comes to set mankind free from old fears and bonds. Man is exalted by the strange method of telling him that he is neither intelligent nor free, that he is without rights, duties or dignities, that in the future morality will disappear, and with its disappearance man will have reached his goal, for he will have attained the status of one of his own machines. In all the long history of thought there have been few such examples of false values and false analogy. In the face of such doctrines as these David's words sound strange indeed:

Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor: and hast set him over the works of thy hands.

Or even if man is recognized as something other than the car he drives, the true dignity of his human nature is lost sight of or denied. "*Melior est conditio posidentis*": and the strong apply the maxim by a universal gang morality according to which new lives may be prevented and old ones destroyed without appeal to any right except that of power. If God and a future life are considered, it is never in a personal way, for thoughts of a personal God and a personal immortality are too daring in themselves and too intolerable in their consequences to be acceptable to this exact and small-scaled scheme of things.

In reality old and reactionary but ever being put forth as something new and liberalizing, these professions seem impotent enough within the lecture-room or study. The doctrines by which man is stripped of his human character, robbed of his rights, blinded to his duties and turned from his high destiny are thought to be only academic theories, technically expressed. But they do not remain mere theories for long. The popularizer takes them into his charge, drops the technical terms and expresses them so baldly and crudely that even the most practical-minded may understand. Consciously or unconsciously, popular acceptance is given to them, and then one may judge whether these substitutions and reductions are to man's advantage. Do they add to his stature, give him new pride and confidence in himself, increase his courage and hope in the midst of troubles which are assuredly not growing less? The war, with over thirty million men in arms, driven by a lash that was unseen but none the less real, was ruthless and inhuman discipline and not the new freedom that was promised to men. Nor is the greedy and steadily growing absolutism of the state. Venality, disdain for truth, contempt for human life would seem the preface to the new order. And woman and her emancipation is the saddest consumma-

tion of all; for the new freedom for women is a return to her ancient pagan subjugation, to a slavery that is made up of divorce, polygamy, childlessness and self-support.

Though the popularizer, the opportunist, those who see their way to exploit and enslave their fellows, the people themselves, apathetic and credulous, all have their share in these evils, yet back of them all stand those who by their own protestations are the intellectual and moral leaders of the age. It is by them that the initial, and often the greatest, wrong is committed. By some it is done blatantly and knowingly, out of a desire to lead the philosophic procession and out of a fear of being passed by; with others it is a sin of omission rather than of commission, or a result of spiritual and temporal factors beyond their own knowledge or control. In all is lacking the courage that is necessary to throw aside the half-truth and the lie, and in the place of this courage is found a selfish caution, disguised and denied, it is true, but yet real and working.

Talk as they will of the adventurous spirit, of meeting the challenge of the future, of being realists in facing and handling brute facts, of new religions and a free man's worship, there is little enough of the reality among the philosophers of the day. Somehow the buoyancy and courage of youth are gone; and in their stead are found the love of ease and safety, the desire to evade and escape the challenge and the struggle, which mark aging men. So long have men been concerned about the conditions of life that they now think them better than life itself. So much have men toiled over the necessities and comforts and luxuries of this world, that they have grown to think them first the greatest, and then the only, good. Happily, nothing human is ever completely static, and there are indications even now of a change for the better. But from philosophers who lack the truth which sets men free and the courage and audacity which come from it, it is idle to expect much, even though all around them lies fallow the soil from which better thoughts may spring.

Aristotle said that philosophy begins in wonder, and surely science today provides marvels for man's wonder. But he takes them casually, and tiring of them turns not to older and simpler things, but cries for others more novel and exciting. So also with the hidden wonders of the universe. Science uncovers them and puts them at man's disposal. Yet no matter how full of wonder they are, man looks at them but coldly, and takes them for granted with an unthinking and unthanking sophistication. Perhaps it is too much in these times to expect the freshness and clarity of outlook of an earlier day. In the midst of his great achievements man has lost the sense of naive wonder, has lost the sense even of his own greatness and dignity. Paradoxically, it may be only when his achievements are brought again to naught that he will regain those nobler and almost forgotten conceptions of himself and of Him who made all things.

MEXICO ON SUNDAY MORNING

By JAMES J. WALSH

IN THE midst of all the disturbances nearly always with a religious angle which have been reported from Mexico during the past score of years, I feel sure that Catholics here in the United States like myself must have wondered how seriously the Mexicans took their religion and whether there probably had not come some impairment of it as the result of the persecutions to which they had been subjected. Though aware that the effort to take away their religion from the Irish by persecution had only resulted in making them more fervent Catholics, doubtless many were inclined to think that the Mexicans were different from the Irish in this regard, and that persecution would not have the effect of increasing their faith but of weening people away from it. In spite of the lessons of history, one is prone to forget that persecution inevitably proves a confirmation of faith and a renewal of religion.

I had the opportunity to see that this was as true in Mexico as in Ireland during a recent visit to Mexico City, where I was invited to read a paper before the Third Pan-American Medical Congress. I found the very practical index of the religious faith of the Mexicans in their attendance at Mass on Sundays and also on weekdays. When I asked at my hotel for the parish church, I was told that it was the Church of the Holy Family, just around the corner. The hotel clerk thought that Mass was at nine o'clock. Not knowing, however, that he referred to a special service for English-speaking people at nine o'clock in the crypt, we went into the main church, where Mass was at half-past eight, so we heard part of one Mass and stayed for the next at half-past nine. The church was crowded at both Masses. All the seats were taken and there were many people standing at the sides and back of both the nave and the crossing. And there was a good congregation also at Mass in the crypt.

The congregation was beautifully democratic. Beside us there sat a bare-footed Indian, and we saw many more of them coming out of the church. On the other side of us sat a señora with the look of one whose family had come over to America in the early days of the Spanish conquest. At the end of our seat was a tall, lank Spaniard who might easily have served as a model for a picture of Don Quixote, and there were Spanish hidalgos in front and behind us. People of all sorts came in and out of the church at the two Masses. I think the proportion of men was as large as in New York. There was no doubt at all about the devotion of the people who were present. It was easy to see that they were there to worship and not for any conventional reason.

There was railing after railing full of communicants at both Masses as well as after Mass. We saw a large number going to confession during Mass. Con-

fessionals in Mexico are not shut in like our own. On the contrary, there is almost as little privacy about confession as the proverbial goldfish has. Even the confessor's seat is not enclosed in front, though there are a back and sides to the confessional with the usual grilles. The women go to confession at the side. Many of the men and boys kneel at the feet of the confessor. One small boy, who if he had knelt down would have required the confessor to lean over rather far, stood up beside the priest and leaned against his shoulder and made his confession that way. There was a touch of fatherliness about it that made confession something quite different from the formal affair it is with us. It touched the chords of a Catholic heart. Conventionality disappeared and reverence for the sacrament of forgiveness as the Lord founded it took its place.

After these two Masses and a glimpse of the English-speaking congregation in the crypt, we went to Sanborn's for breakfast. As we were coming out we met a congregation coming out from the ten o'clock Mass who had crowded St. Francis's to its capacity. We wandered round the corner and dropped into St. Bridget's, which is the church in Mexico City in which fashionable Catholic weddings are held, and found it so crowded that it would have been difficult to get a seat though we were there only a few minutes after eleven. Next door to this was a Methodist meeting-house in a former monastery, so we took a look in there and found a handful of people. Tempted to go a little farther in our exploration, we went to the Episcopal cathedral and reached there at the end of the sermon. We found forty-one people present, twelve of whom were men, and most of them seemed to be either English or American visitors in Mexico City. We were surprised to find the symbol of the Saviour, I H S, prominently displayed on the pulpit, and were more surprised to hear the archdeacon say in his sermon that he would not have his congregation think for a moment that they belonged to any of the churches which had been founded in the sixteenth century. Their church went back to apostolic times and was Catholic and Apostolic. On leaving the Episcopal church we passed, some little distance away, the Mexican National Church. This was formerly the Church of Corpus Christi, on the Alameda, and had been confiscated by the government for the establishment of a Mexican church in opposition to the Roman. There were so few in it that we wondered why there was any use in holding the service.

It was noon by this time, but we dropped into the cathedral and had occasion to see crowds at five more Masses. As visitors we had the privilege of looking round the magnificent old church, the largest on the American continent, so that at each of the Masses there

were times when we could see the faces of the congregation. There was no doubt at all that they were worshipers. There was devotion in their faces. Father Duffy said once that it would be easy for a chance visitor, coming into a Catholic church and standing at the back, to think that most of the people present had their heads bowed merely conventionally and were probably occupied with other thoughts besides those of worship. A Catholic congregation must be viewed, he added, not from the rear of the church but from the altar. A single look at the congregation will show that they are intent on following the tragedy of Calvary as it is reënacted in the Mass, and there are very few faces as the priest looks down on them that have not an air of simple-hearted devotion. That was what we found in Mexico. Masses succeeded one another, as they do in the United States, from six o'clock until noon; the last Mass at the cathedral began after one. At all the nearly dozen Masses at which we made it our special business to get a glimpse of the congregation, we found the church crowded with people intent on fulfilling the obligation of hearing Mass on Sunday.

In various cities of Mexico that I visited I came in contact with some very interesting Catholics. In one town where the bank closed before I could secure some money for the next day's travel (the only money one could get was silver pesos and they weighed so heavy that I did not want to carry any more than was absolutely necessary), I was introduced as a Knight of Columbus to the manager who was himself a Fourth Degree Knight, and he was glad to give me the opportunity to get what money I needed on my letter of credit. I found that he was not only a Knight of Columbus but also a Knight of St. Gregory, and I was told by the owner of the hotel where I stayed—himself a Knight of Columbus—that my gracious friend, the banker, was a daily communicant. I had occasion to realize that there were a number of men prominent in business and in social life who were daily communicants. Our parish church had a good crowd at Mass every morning at eight o'clock. They were ahead of us in New York in that matter.

One thing is perfectly clear, then, that the Mexicans are good Catholics and that the recent persecution in Mexico is only doing what persecutions have always done—bringing people back to the practice of their religion. The obligation of hearing Mass on Sunday is not fulfilled conventionally, but with a devotion that leaves no doubt that religion is a very serious duty. The most wonderful element in it all is the thorough-going democracy of the crowd who come to Mass. Some of them are in rags and some of them are without shoes, while many dress in a way indicating that they are among the better-to-do classes of Mexico City, but they all feel equal before the Lord and they all worship together. To see the motley group that gathered at the Communion rail was enough to make one feel that here was a brotherhood of hearts under the Fatherhood of God.

A POTENTIAL POET'S ALIBI

By BRIGID M. WALSH

RECENTLY in my reading I came across a statement which gave rise to the most delightful speculation. It was attributed to some wise and eminent man whose name unfortunately I have forgotten except that it wasn't George Bernard Shaw. He said that the world would be a better place to live in if all the culture of each generation were destroyed at its passing and each new generation left to evolve its own. Before reason can point out the impracticability of any such drastic measure, the mind has time to play with some of its more charming possibilities. Without the Past, with a capital P and a halo of glory, left from infancy absolutely uninhibited and unhampered in the matter of self-expression, what would we produce? Without hope of the homage of Posterity, with a capital P and the virtues of the unknown, would we go to the trouble of producing anything? Would Shakespeare have become the shining light of English letters if he had not had access to Holinshed's "Chronicles" and Plutarch's "Lives"? Without knowledge of Shakespeare, would our geniuses with an urge toward dramatic expression achieve fame in individual ways of their own? Would painters paint better pictures or sculptors still fashion masterpieces, if knowledge of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo had been carefully eliminated from their education? The possibilities are endless and delightful, but for me the most agreeable would be the prospect of the necessary adjustment in our modern system of literary education—and not merely adjustment, for on what is that system based if not on continuous admiration of and respect for the culture of preceding generations? This would be the first to go, and it would go completely overboard in this pleasant Utopia of my dream. For I am its victim—a victim of that deadly system of intensive study of the works of authors named immortal, who expressed their thoughts in splendid rhythmic language but who would never have written so beautifully if they had spent their best creative periods in awed and silent admiration of the splendid rhythmic language of others who had gone before them.

I am one endowed by nature, for better or worse, with a temperament peculiarly responsive to the emotion or mood of the moment, and I discovered at an early age that that response invariably begot in me an insuppressible desire to express my thoughts in poetic language. Childish misfortunes were turned into joys, and joys were increased a hundredfold, when I had suitably celebrated them in rhyme. Prose seemed dull and cold to me except when it possessed some of the qualities of poetry. Naturally, when I went to college I decided on courses in arts, with special reference to English literature. It was my good or ill fortune then to find myself under the guidance of a professor who, twenty years before, had published a slender volume of poems and consequently could be relied upon to lay stress on poetry with a special affection for the major and minor poets of the Romantic revival. His very real enthusiasm for all that was best in English poetry quickly communicated itself to me and before very long I was enslaved. From Caedmon to Rupert Brooke I traced every winding of that glorious stream, knew every shining name that had kept alive the golden flame from age to age and knelt a willing worshiper at the shrine of each. The fact that I was studying for an examination for which a thorough knowledge of English poetry was but a fourth or fifth of the requirements troubled me not at all. And in this I was aided and abetted by my English professor. A poet himself (how the memory of that slim volume of poems seemed to light the obscure days on which he had fallen!), he naturally

gave more time to the Romantic revival than he did, say, to the five plays of Shakespeare that were on my program. As if conscious of his treachery he would intimate slyly from time to time that, in the final examinations, we would find alternative questions to all of the questions dealing with the plays. Was ever treatment more cavalier accorded to that perennial pride of English literature?

All this would probably have done me no permanent harm if I had restricted myself to the study of the poets and their works. But my professor went further. For some unknown reason he desired me to memorize extensively. It was made plain to me that if I could support my opinions at the examinations with illustrative quotations my chances of a degree were all the more assured, and if I could illustrate my statements with more and more quotations my chances of honors were exceedingly high. It is natural at eighteen to wish to outshine one's fellows and I proceeded to memorize poetry as fast as my poor brain would absorb it, my youthful enthusiasm making the task a joy. I succeeded beyond my wildest hopes. My degree essay was one long succession of gems from other people's thoughts strung together by one single thread of my own. The thread wasn't of the strongest and it was patently knotted together here and there, but it pleased my excellent mentors and I scored high on the honor list.

But at what a price to my originality and spontaneity of expression! It was only by degrees that the full extent of the disaster was made plain to me. Every beautiful scene I came upon, every inspired mood, every new emotional experience was immediately fitted in my mind to one of those exquisite passages it had been my joy to commit to memory. Did I walk by the seashore in a tranquil twilight listening to the murmur of the waves gently washing the pebbles of the strand, immediately Arnold's beautiful lines on "Dover Beach" chanted themselves in my heart and on my lips. How could I try to express the aching beauty of it, the regret for the passing of youth and love, the gentle melancholy that engulfed me when Arnold had done it so well so long before?

The coming of spring, the gradual renewal of all the fresh, vivid beauty of nature after the dreary barrenness of winter brought inspiration burning for expression, but memory was always at hand with those stirring, swinging lines of Swinburne's which would make anything I could write seem pale and lifeless by comparison:

"When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow and plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain."

Even afterward, when his continual alliteration and love for intricate and striking rhymes had begun to pall, spring never came without bringing to my mind that splendid impetuous opening to "Atalanta in Calydon."

And so on through every emotion and experience. Wordsworth accompanied me on my walks through country lanes (I had come to care little for his company but he was there every time). Shelley gave articulation to my joy on hearing a lark in the sky on a summer's day. Coleridge and Keats stood ready to give words to a mood of depression. Arnold, Morris and Yeats expressed perfectly for me my moods of wistful sadness over the passing of all things beautiful in life. Whenever I fancied myself in love, hundreds of verses of poets of all ages thronged to my rescue when I called on the muse to do justice to the charms of my beloved. And again my muse folded her wings and was at rest.

It may be reasonably objected here that if I had really been honestly gifted by nature with a genuine talent for the writing of poetry, it would have manifested itself before my misguided education had a chance to interfere or later even in spite of it. As a matter of fact, the few attempts that have survived from the days before I knew anything of alexandrines or iambic pentameters might, to an impartial or critical eye, seem entirely lacking in evidences of future greatness. But whether my talent or inclination, left to itself, would have amounted to anything worth while is at least problematical. Possibly a great social satirist was lost in me, or a gentle humorist making the world laugh at its follies, or a great singer of tragic themes, or a writer of epics or a sweet and gentle lyricist. Neither the world nor I will ever know, alas! But whenever wise and eminent gentlemen other than George Bernard Shaw put forward suggestions by which the world might be improved and old gods dethroned, my mind goes back to an early and favorite vision of mine—a vision of myself as a modest and graceful laurel-crowned figure with head bent in dignified acknowledgment of the plaudits of the multitude—and I console myself, in the placid and uneventful obscurity of my days, with the thought that, given youth again and freedom and a new order of things, I would not have the slightest difficulty in making that charming vision a reality.

PAINTER OF CHIEFS

By VINCENT ENGELS

FROM the now useless fittings of an old liquor store in northeastern Wisconsin, there was recently recovered a series of twenty-two drawings by George Catlin, self portraits, in which the artist's face registers the whole range of emotions. They are remarkable chiefly because they must anticipate by a quarter of a century or more Darwin's studies in expression. For the face is that of a very young man, a younger man than we see in the oil portrait which Catlin made of himself some time before 1829, when he left Philadelphia to paint the Indians. Through a leaky roof or broken window the rain has come at these drawings, bar flies have left their marks, and a century has yellowed the paper on which they are done, yet the lines are clear and strong. How they passed from proper Philadelphia to a liquor store on the frontier of the world can only be explained by the peregrinations and very amiable eccentricities of one of the artist's nephews. But that is another story, and if one had the patience and acumen to get at the facts, with the vision and the sympathy to understand, it would doubtless prove a glorious one.

So far the discovery of these drawings, now come to quiet harbor in the museum at Green Bay, has aroused not the least interest. Once they would have drawn great crowds at a shilling a head; once Louis Napoleon would have gone to see them; once not a journal of importance but would have had its opinion of them. The eclipse of Catlin's fame in our time could not have been greater if he had been an exceedingly minor poet, yet to our grandfathers he was an artist, yes a benefactor, whom their grandchildren should certainly delight to honor.

This great man was something of an American Doughty. He ventured among a primitive, little-known, and essentially hostile people; he went often alone; he sought hospitality from camp to camp, and in this way he traversed most of our barbarian West and some parts of the South American wilderness which have only recently been reexplored. Sometimes he traveled against the advice of authorities, and although as a

rule the Indians were friendly and helpful, their superstitions were so easily excited that he was never entirely safe. Spiritually, however, little kinship between him and Doughty is possible. Doughty never allowed himself to forget the superiority of the English; he pitied his Arabs, but he despised them, too; whereas Catlin so frequently compared Indians and whites to the disadvantage of the latter that it seems a pity he was not born in a wigwam. There is another important difference. Catlin's bent was not toward learning, but toward persuasion; although to paint the Indians was a work to which he early resolved to "devote a whole lifetime of enthusiasm," he was content to be an unschooled artist—rather proud of it, in fact; he succeeded in obtaining "authentic likenesses," as sundry explorers and Indian agents testified, and he was always anxious to show these testimonials to his skill. Doughty would sooner, I think, have run naked through the British Museum.

Catlin was a little like H. G. Wells in the scope and activity of his mind, full of astonishing notions about everything in the world, yet inclined to forego much of the research necessary to establish them.

But his true spiritual parallel, regardless of the disparity between their external circumstances, is Henry Ford. Like Mr. Ford, Catlin was overly serious, was an amateur of antiquity, had rather violent phobias, was abstemious, and was a craftsman, with not much of the science of his craft, but undisputably a great knack for it. Like Mr. Ford he had a highly developed sense of multitudes—instead of selling his pictures at a high price to the few who could afford them, he displayed them to the public for a small charge. And like Mr. Ford he believed in mass production. It was not enough to paint a few representative types; he painted chiefs of all the tribes and some of their lesser men, too, their squaws and papooses, their homes and activities. With him it was not one picture of a buffalo hunt, but pictures of buffalo hunting as practised on snowshoes, on foot, from horseback, and from canoes when the animals were fording. It was not the picture of an Indian dance, but pictures of all their dances, including the dance to the *Berdashe*, which must have been particularly interesting, because he resorts to Sioux in describing it, as indeed he does on other unusual occasions, and this is his most annoying weakness. Like Mr. Ford's silence, at critical moments.

In his day Catlin's fame was widespread. His ideas and his personality never ceased to be welcomed by harried newspaper men. As a rule, the press was kind to him. A typical observation was that of the *Philadelphia Gazette*, that his collection was "one of those productions which illustrate, in an eminent degree, the observation of Playfair, that when the proper time has arrived for some great work to be performed, some individual is raised up by Providence whose position and character and capacity precisely fit him for accomplishing the design."

In 1838 the Indian Gallery's receipts were diminishing, and Catlin thought that the time had come to give it a permanent home. Too proud of it to place it in private hands, he appealed to the government, and a year later, when no action had as yet been taken, he decided to exhibit it abroad. At once the press became alarmed that the collection might pass permanently to Europe, and to keep Catlin at home became a sort of crusade among the journalists. The reasons for their agitation were justified. As feared, his arrival on the other side was hailed by the *Quarterly Review* and the *Conservative Journal* with expressions of mourning for the fate of Catlin's subjects, and the *Morning Post's* review was bristling with denunciation for "the exterminating policy of the United States in which treachery

has recently played a counterpart to the most gratuitous despotism," referring of course to the Osceola affair. The days of art for art's sake being yet a good way off, none of the reviewers confined themselves to questions of technique and conception.

In London Catlin suffered the first of many trials. Excited by reports of several catastrophes at sea, he worked hard on a plan for "disengaging and floating quarter-decks" perfected it to his satisfaction, built a model and offered it for patent, all at a cost of £130 sterling, only to discover that a Captain Oldmixon had taken out a patent on a similar contraption five years before. It was not the loss of the money which concerned him so much, although he was hard pressed just then, as the loss of the time involved, and of the satisfaction of invention. Then his wife died, his "dear Clara" who once "with the lightness of the bounding antelopes that dwell upon their shores, had darted over the grassy banks" of the Ohio and the Arkansas, and with him had "inhaled the glowing sweetness of Florida's lovely coast."

But this was not all. Several petitions to Congress for the purchase of his collection, including one from the American Artists in Paris, were favorably reported by the committees to which they were referred, and then neglected. Speculations in London cost him all the money he had, and some that he had not. Accordingly Mr. Joseph Harrison of Philadelphia, who had liens on the collection, shipped it to Philadelphia, and Catlin was an orphaned artist. It was partly in an effort to restore his fortunes, incidentally, that he made those amazing and adventurous journeys in 1852 and in 1856 through the valleys of the Orinoco, the Amazon, the Madeira and the River Plate, across the Crystal Mountains, and from Lima across the Andes to the Amazon.

While Catlin was painting, writing, inventing and exploring in Europe and South America, he did not forget that at home his Indians were being driven from their hunting grounds into absolutely worthless reservations "out of the limits of which" they were to be treated as enemies of war. The pages which he wrote in 1838 on the gradual extinction of the Indian have been the model, I believe, for all which have since been written. But the government paid no more attention to these writings than it had to his pictures. Congress never did buy his collection, although after his death in 1872 the Harrisons presented it to the Smithsonian.

For forty years he had been one of the busiest men in the world. He had many commissions to execute, mostly enlarged copies of paintings in his collection. Louis Napoleon, who was very interested in him, ordered fifteen of these for Versailles. And he wrote a variety of books, of which his novels for boys and his books of travel contain some of the most valuable accounts we have of Indian life. In the Indians he discovers the lost tribes of Israel, and in one band, the Mandans, finds the descendants of the Welsh prince Madoc, of whom the legend tells that discovering far to the west a fair green land, he returned to his home, recruited the members of a colony, and left Wales behind him forever.

Catlin also wrote a book called "Shut Your Mouth and Save Your Life," urging the white race to adopt the Indian practice of breathing through the nose at all times, even when asleep, which is in itself a strange commentary on the habits of our fathers. He wrote another called, "The Steam Raft, or Life on the Ocean," in the cause of a floating civilization. Indeed he had a most curious and roving mind, and he was ever confident that sooner or later his talent for invention would assert itself. But for that he was born too soon.

THE PLAY AND SCREEN

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

The Man on Stilts

TOO SLOW for farce, too malignantly obvious for satire, and without a scrap of the illusion necessary for an honest play, the "comedy" by Edwin and Albert Barker with which Arthur Hopkins has just opened his season is one of the most lamentable exhibitions of bankrupt mentality Broadway has seen in many long days.

The authors are not to blame. Everyone has a right to concoct a play now and then, if only for his own amusement and satisfaction. If the Barkers made the belated discovery that America can be quite absurd about its flagpole sitters and endurance dancers, and if they thought there was enough material for a play in the idea—instead of barely enough for a single sentence—then we cannot blame the Barkers for writing such a play. But when a manager reputed to be one of Broadway's intelligentsia buys the play, holds it for some months, talks about it and finally produces it, then we have a right to howl with pained surprise.

"The Man on Stilts" is all innocent enough. But, unhappily, it is not only innocent of the major vices but also quite innocent of wit, of gaiety, of subtlety, of swift action, of mordant satire, in fact of anything and everything which might make it endurable as entertainment. It purports to tell the story of a young man's arrival in New York after a widely publicized trip across the continent in a steam-roller, and of the dark ways by which heroes are made for public consumption. The nearest approach to irony which the play achieves is when this young man, in a radio speech, lets loose his pent-up disgust with the whole business—only to find that his frankness makes him doubly the national hero he was before. This minute kernel of thought might possibly have been conveyed to some effect in a very brief one-act sketch in a musical review.

Just why, then, did Arthur Hopkins produce "The Man on Stilts"? That is the really important question. If Asteroid Productions, Inc.—meaning any fly-by-night production group—had staged it, one would merely sigh and pass on. But Arthur Hopkins is one of our very few individual producers with a reputation. To be sure, it was Arthur Hopkins who ceremoniously produced "Machinal" some time back—a play which pretended to be a serious study of woman in the machine age, and turned out to be nothing more than the miseries and the adultery of a tabloid moron. Is it possible Mr. Hopkins's true caliber can be measured by "Machinal" and "The Man on Stilts"? Is he, after all, just another Broadway producer, so intent on discovering novelty and sensation that he lets pass by all the simple and honest plays by unpretentious playwrights?

At times, I like to glance back over the last few years in order to recall plays which the Broadway spirit has missed. One thinks tenderly, for example, of many of the successes at Miss Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre—of "Cradle Song," of "The Lady from Alfaqueque," of "The Women Have Their Way," of a vibrant and glowing "Romeo and Juliet." Or one recalls "The Dybbuk" at the little Neighborhood Playhouse on distant Grand Street, or "The Romantic Young Lady" at the same place. Or one remembers that it was Walter Hampden, and not a Broadwayite, who revived "Cyrano" with astonishing response, and capped it with that splendid romance, "Caponsacchi." Rumor has it that Elmer Rice had to provide part of the financial backing for his own play, "Street Scene,"

before Broadway would sponsor it. And whether you like O'Neill, or simply admit that, in his disordered way, he is one of our most authentic dramatists, you cannot forget that Arthur Hopkins was doing something else when the impoverished little Provincetown Playhouse brought O'Neill from obscurity.

The point is that every season the managers, including the more pretentious ones, such as Mr. Hopkins, are apt to bewail the complete absence of good scripts. Yet each season continues to produce its quota of charming or trenchant plays, usually brought up from long obscurity, leaving the orthodox managers to gasp and to wonder why they missed chances which lay right under their noses. The trouble, as I venture to name it, lies in the overstraining for sensation. It is a commonplace of experience that whatever we strain after too hard, we generally miss, whether it is a long drive on the golf course, or the discovery of a new play. It is simplicity of instinct and judgment which the Broadway mind lacks—not the simplicity of retarded mentality, to be sure, but the simplicity of the great and wise men of all time, and the maturity which that simplicity brings.

There is just one word of praise due "The Man on Stilts," and that word belongs to Harry Ellerbe whose time Mr. Hopkins has elected to waste as the steam-roller hero of the piece. Mr. Ellerbe made his first, and a most fortunate, impression on Broadway last year in George Kelly's "Philip Goes Forth." In spite of all the brittle absurdities of the present play, he manages to confirm the impression that he is one of the most promising juveniles of recent years, less choked with mannerisms than Glenn Hunter in his prime, and thoroughly engaging both as an actor and as a personality of our stage.

The Guardsman—on the Screen

THOSE who saw Ferenc Molnar's "The Guardsman" several years ago on the stage will recall that its interest centers chiefly around the possible infidelity of an actress whose jealous husband (himself an actor) masquerades as a Russian guardsman in order to test his own wife's powers of resistance. She yields to "the guardsman," only to maintain later on, however, that she knew all along who he was. This leaves the actor about where he started, since his vanity is so great that he does not want to believe that his wife could have penetrated his disguise.

The general character of the play is so obvious from its plot that little more need be said about it. It merely follows the threadbare "sophisticated" formula of throwing glamor and wit around adultery in the attempt to make basic dishonesty seem nothing more than trivial nonsense. The only real interest in the screen version of this play is the chance it affords to see how completely the art of two of our leading actors can be caught up by the new medium. Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt play the actor and actress on the screen as they did in the original stage production.

I have maintained for some time that the talking screen would have great difficulty in attempting to convey the subtleties of a play of character as distinct from action. But after seeing what two artists of the caliber of Miss Fontanne and Mr. Lunt can do, I shall have to abandon some of my conviction. They make the screen absorbingly interesting even in those scenes where the slightest inflection of the voice and the merest lift of an eyebrow are meant to convey a multitude of varied

emotions. They triumph precisely in that task of character creation which I have felt would be thankless on the screen.

This brings up the whole question of the artist and his medium. There are always some people who have an inherent, though a none too logical, objection to anything mechanical, forgetting, perhaps, that many artistic media have assumed a quasi-mechanical character in the past, long before that character took the form of machines. Most of our musical instruments are mechanical, as distinct, let us say, from a melody sung by the human voice. Certainly the piano is a complex mechanical affair. So is the modern flute, as distinct from some primitive reed instrument. A modern electric organ is one huge mass of mechanical contrivances which the organist must use to produce desired effects. It might still be argued, of course, that the fundamental objection is against mechanical reproduction, and not against mechanical production in the first instance. But even here the fundamental character of the objection breaks down before many forms of mechanically reproduced art that have been recognized and acclaimed for generations. What of etchings and engravings? The engraver makes one matrix from which a large number of impressions are struck off on a mechanical press. Many of the most highly valued tiles and statuettes of the Italian masters have merely been cast mechanically in quantities from an original design. It is quite true that we value most highly of all the single painting, or the single bit of sculpture of which the mold has been broken, or the original hand-written manuscript of some poem which the printing-press has later multiplied mechanically several thousand fold. But that is a matter of the collector's exclusive interest rather than of artistic merit considered alone. We do not enjoy a beautiful poem or a great novel the less because it has been multiplied a hundred thousand times on the printing-press. The essential artistry lies in the original thought and the form given to that thought in words.

For this reason I cannot join in the wail of protest against the mechanical reproduction of the work of great actors. What they do is to create the matrix, as definitely as the engraver makes his one plate, or as the poet gives his words to the printer. Possibly we should all feel more immediate personal warmth in reading the manuscript of a poem, in seeing the actual pen strokes by which the poet gave life to his words. In the same way, we shall always miss on the screen the immediate personal aura that surrounds the work of a great actor on the stage. The screen can never be more than the substitute for the stage. But it may easily be quite as artistic a substitute as the printed page for the poet's manuscript, or as the engraver's print for the original plate or for the original sketches. The artistry will lie in the making of the matrix. Miss Fontanne and Mr. Lunt have proved that they can put as much real artistry into the making of a sound film as into their acting on a living stage. (At the Astor Theatre.)

Mr. Aborn Revives The Merry Widow

FOLLOWING his season of Gilbert and Sullivan, Milton Aborn has started on his series of older operettas by reviving "The Merry Widow." Donald Brian still officiates as Prince Danilo, and manages quite easily to make one forget that it is over twenty years since he first took the part. The rest of the performance, however, lacks glamor. Energy, enthusiasm and good humor are enough to make Gilbert and Sullivan delightful. But more is needed for such thin echoes as those offered by "The Merry Widow." Most operettas of an older day need all the flimflam of gorgeousness to create the frail illusion of romance. (At the Erlanger Theatre.)

COMMUNICATIONS

PATRIOTIC TYRANNY

Rome, Italy.

TO the Editor: During the Catholic Press Month, Bishop Boyle touched the root of a very important matter when he said, "We shall lack a thoroughly Catholic-minded people so long as the mentality of Catholics is molded in other quarters by the news and the opinions of the news read there."

The absence of the Catholic sense is one of the most serious ailments of the age. This lack is evidenced in many ways, such as the want of moderation and breadth of view in judgments and valuations, in the intemperance with which some speak in favor of a pet notion or prejudice, but above all in the want of proper pride in, and appreciation of, the gift of faith. This condition cannot be entirely due to secular influence, at least not directly, but to something deeper which may be a failure to realize that Catholicism is a consistent manner of life and thought—a life formed and governed by certain eternal truths and principles that must be applied even though they go against the grain. There is no great merit in obeying the demands of the Faith while they coincide with our own inclinations, preconceptions and interests. To be Catholic-minded is to think with the Church, to accept its dogmas and discipline, its hard sayings as well as its beauties and consolations; for Saint Paul says all the other exquisite qualities "profiteth me nothing if I have not charity."

An example of the appalling incompleteness of obedience to Catholic teaching is shown in the letter of the Reverend Oliver Kapsner, O.S.B., in *THE COMMONWEAL* of April 8. It is disquieting to read that men who represent "a portion of the better mental caliber of the Continent . . . are not inclined to listen to proposals for a peaceful settlement, but would go to war tomorrow if they had funds to carry on a war." This in spite of the fact that across the Tiber from this international university, from which he writes, the voice of the Vicar of Christ constantly pleads for the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ, and condemns in no feeble terms the prevalent excessive nationalism that should not exist in a mind that has fully grasped the meaning of God's kingdom on earth. These men make themselves, not the Church, the judge of what constitutes a just war. It never seems to occur to the ultra-patriotic that their countries' difficulties may be self-created, or that Divine Providence exists. If it were left to the nation without sin to fire the first shot, the world would never again be set aflame by war.

Patriotism seems to be the blindest of all the virtues. Why should it be considered almost treason to ask just what the flag of one's allegiance stands for in the year of grace 1931? What measure of justice and freedom is apportioned to the citizens by the powers that govern or misgovern under that flag today? The liberty that Catholics enjoy in some English-speaking countries to pay taxes to support schools that they cannot conscientiously use without receiving an equivalent is not a thing to boast about. However the liberty to strive for justice without being called unpatriotic is no small thing, as is verified by the magnificent fight that Catholics and others carry on in England for equal rights for religious schools.

It is plain that in most countries comprised in what is still called Western civilization, the things of Caesar have usurped the things of God to a certain extent—often to an alarming extent—in the minds of many who call themselves Catholics and are sometimes called "our leading Catholics" by people who ought to know better. The chauvinistic mind is more in evidence than the Catholic mind.

It is extraordinary how popular phrases can mesmerize men and obscure real issues. Some years ago there was no more obsessing cry than "making the world safe for democracy," while the real need was to make the autocracies, plutocracies and demagogues that rule in the name of demos safe for the world. So today it is well not to take it for granted too confidently that all that we find in the Catholic press tends to the formation of the Catholic mind. It is often unconsciously influenced much more than is realized by environment and the secular press that it is supposed to counteract. Therefore it is important that the Catholic press itself be Catholic-minded. The press is a powerful teacher, but unfortunately unlike other teachers it is not obliged to have credentials. A Catholic paper should inspire confidence, one does not wish to approach it with the proverbial grain of salt.

I read lately three articles filled with comparisons. One in a London secular daily, and the others in American Catholic papers. All the writers without doubt meant well but were similarly irritating and misleading. For instance, the London paper said: "Pius XI differs greatly from his two immediate predecessors. But though he came from a different social world and had no diplomatic training, his policy in many ways shows affinity with the great Leo XIII. Like Leo, Pius is anxious to relieve the hard lives of the working masses, etc. Their ideas on the sanctity of the marriage tie and mixed marriages coincide. In one way the Pope's policy differs widely from that of Leo XIII. He has not encouraged the movement led by Viscount Halifax for the return of the Anglican Church to Rome." All true as to the facts but altogether misleading nevertheless. The Pope's policy does not depend upon the social sphere in which he was born, nor on his diplomatic training, but upon the Gospels. And consequently the ideas of Pius XI on marriage are not only the same as those of Leo, but the same as those of all the Popes who have written or spoken on the subject, as well as those of Saint Paul, Saint Mathew, Saint Augustine, etc., as can be seen by anyone taking the trouble to read the latest encyclical on marriage. Again, the Popes without exception desire the return of all dissidents to the center of unity, but as Leo XIII examined exhaustively the Anglican claims and found them wanting, Pius XI is consequently not encouraging what he knows is impossible, namely, what is called corporate reunion. The article would lead some to think that another Pope might countenance the movement.

In his enthusiasm over the Holy Father's radio message, the writer in the American weekly said: "No other Pope among the 260 that reigned before him would have utilized the achievements of the modern world as Pius." Why not? Surely the history of the Popes shows that they have always been abreast of the times when not in advance. Leo XIII told the world years ago the cause of its ills and offered a remedy in the "Rerum Novarum," but men are only now beginning to fathom the wisdom and profundity of his thought. Benedict XV was far in advance of his time when he told the nations drunk with the lust of blood how to make peace, but then, alas, feelings were stronger than reason.

God does not choose his Vicars at random. Peter speaks in each, whether his name is Pius, Gregory, Leo or another. The Pope is of all time, for as Pius XI said in his encyclical on Saint Augustine, "This line of Peter's successors is the rock against which the haughty gates of hell do not prevail." Each is occupied with the most urgent needs of his own years but not exclusively, and uses every lawful means in fulfilling his mission. To Pius XI the radio is a medium to extend the

City of God—which means the spread of evangelical truth and the promotion of the salvation of souls. If "Pius XI has taken modernity as a close ally," it is modernity with a difference. He constantly condemns modern scandals in dress, sports, entertainment, manners, excessive nationalism and the sins called modern though as old as original sin. Pius XI is as modern as "Casti Connubii."

By making idols of modern achievements, instead of using them sanely, the world is cheerfully marching to destruction.

It was a great historic event in the progress of mankind when the living voice of the Pope encircled the globe, but the deepest significance of this epoch-making occurrence lies in the fact that Pope Pius "spoke as one having authority," and his message contained the same eternal truths that have reached the faithful for 1900 years—by many tongues in Jerusalem, by whispers in the catacombs, by letters carried by all means of locomotion, even by dog, train and canoe to the Canadian north, and by foot and camel to the Sahara.

It was fitting that on this great occasion in the Vatican City—the center of civilization—the genius that made the wonderful event possible was there as the Holy Father's herald, to present him to his far-flung audience, and that as a man of science he praised God "Who has given such power to men."

It was no fault of the Prisoners of the Vatican that the settlement with Italy did not take place sooner. When Italy in her own interest at last offered terms that were not incompatible with the dignity and safety of the Holy See, the Pope accepted them, at great material sacrifice, not because he found being a voluntary prisoner irksome, but for the good of souls, as he made abundantly clear at the time. As a matter of fact, the Lateran Treaty has made little difference in the personal life of the Pope. Except for a couple of hasty visits to his extraterritorial possessions in the city of Rome he has not up to the present left the Vatican City.

Il Progresso Italo-Americano, "the first and greatest Italian newspaper in the United States," on March 9 published an article by Senator Vincenzo Morello, commenting on the Holy Father's address to the Lenten preachers, in which he said: "I cannot understand why the Pontiff should continue to speak of *his* Rome. Though he is Bishop of Rome he cannot use the possessive case as when he was its sovereign." The *Osservatore Romano* of March 26 tells him why he cannot understand, and proves that the possessive belong to the Popes as successors of Saint Peter and not as temporal sovereigns, and also enlightens him on the value of that possessive while Rome was still under the ensign of the Caesars though the emperor had moved his seat to Bisanzio, and what it meant when "the barbarians had their eyes on this center of the ancient world, and the cradle and heart of the world of the future." The *Osservatore* reminds him that the emperor took no part in the Pelagian controversy but Saint Augustine wrote "Roma locuta est" (not Innocent I): "Roma, that is the Pope, living Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the See infallible, he who possesses the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the one man to whom it is given to exercise judicial authority on matters pertaining to two worlds—that of time and that of eternity."

Morello's article suited the taste of the proselytizers so well they have had it printed as propaganda against the state religion of Italy. "They know well what it means. The day when the Pope does not say or cannot say 'his Rome,' the Primacy of Peter would receive a wound, and the spiritual empire of Rome and its Divine Mission would be denied, and the Church, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman, that heresy and schism could not overthrow nor barbarians destroy, would fall into line with

Wittenburg, Geneva, Constantinople, Lhasa of the Grand Lama and Mecca."

Thus it is seen that eternal vigilance is the price of safety. Men hope to accomplish by the subtle use of a word of three letters what their cruder methods failed to do. The enemies of the Church are shrewd but in the long run "the shrewdest of them finds his master in the Vatican."

After reading the long article from which the above quotations are taken I read the second American article alluded to above, and thought what a pity that a facile writer should waste time introducing an ugly new word, while a plea for the proper use of words that are commonly employed in a sense contrary to their meaning is very much needed. If the purity of language is not preserved, confusion of mind must result.

It seems to me that the first use of the word "thobbing" by the popular writer was not very happy. In the first place, it is not true that "we all think out the opinion that pleases us and then believe it." The truth is, as someone said the other day, that 5 percent think, 10 percent think they think, and 85 percent would rather die than think. Opinions are thrust upon us by means of the press, cinema, theatre, posters, etc.—generally, by the 10 percent who think they think, and are accepted or rejected according to the taste or prejudice of the individual. Secondly, he light-heartedly goes on record as "disbelieving in the theory that a religious order should maintain and perpetuate the primitive spirit of the organization"; and later says that a "religious order may manifest one set of traits in one epoch and another set in another." But surely the spirit of a religious order is something quite different from the distinguishing features of mind and character of its individual members. Development does not mean loss of identity. The spirit of a religious order is its very life—the perpetuation of the ideal that the founder had in his mind and which was approved by the Holy See. The basic idea of a religious order is to live a life in a manner fitted and conducive to the ideal of the founder. The mode of life is seclusion from the world as far as is consistent with its particular work, observing solemn vows and practising asceticism.

Saint Ignatius did not found a monastic order but "a body of priests organized for apostolic work, and following a religious rule." If he returned to earth, he would find his spirit still lives in the Company of Jesus. It would indeed be a disaster if the sons of Saint Ignatius ceased to be the light cavalry of the Church.

It would surprise Father Jarrett and Father McNabb to hear that they have outlived the spirit of their revered founder. Methods change with time and place, but the zeal of Dominicans today for the uprooting of heresy is not necessarily less than that of Saint Dominic though they cannot deal with it in the same way, or so effectively as he dealt with the Albigensian heresy. "Gracious reasonableness and gentle enlightenment" are in the spirit of the Dominican order as they were in its founder, but they are not all. It was the same Christ Who preached the sermon on the mount, and upset the tables of the money changers, Who saw the multitude depart rather than gild the hard saying, and afterward went like a lamb to the slaughter. It must be always thus unless one is prepared to concede equal rights to truth and error. Those who upon occasion can be indignant and caustic find themselves in excellent company.

Much depends upon the personality as to method, but in the vital matter of truth consistency is a jewel. What would have happened if mediaeval Spain had looked upon the Moslem menace with the same indifference as many look upon the

Bolshevist horror today? The Church in Spain then had its back to the wall fighting for its life and the life of Europe. May it now find defenders as faithful and successful as then!

The point of view of a person living a secluded, successful life where no danger threatens, for the moment, and no roof obstructs the view of his far horizons, must of necessity be somewhat different to that of one living in Rome where the echos of the conflicts of all the world converge, and one sees the Church universally, always triumphing, and always sorrowing. Not all the great functions, the triumphs, consolations and miracles of grace that one sees and rejoices in can hide the fact that the Church is suffering somewhere ceaselessly. Joy and sorrow, the smile and the tear, go hand in hand.

The Catholic Church being for all time and for all peoples, the press that represents it should have a universal outlook, even the papers that are known only locally, for everyone cannot have the quarterlies, monthlies and weeklies of outstanding merit. If "the majority of readers have immature minds," it is the duty of Catholic writers to conscientiously help to improve them. This will not be done by smart writing, concessions to popularity or the smashing of precedents. It is possible to be serious without being solemn, to see things as they are without being pessimistic.

But above all let us "hold fast to the traditions," for in the past are the sources from which we draw our strength.

ANNE MANNING.

OTHER "GREEN PASTURES"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: Washington has produced something not yet widely known, which ranks already with "Green Pastures" and promises to surpass it.

About ten years ago a Negro parish was founded on the site of an old Civil War fortress on Anacostia Heights, in one of the poorest colored sections of Washington; and Washington yields to no city of the United States in neglect of the colored population. The parish struggled precariously for years under disheartening conditions, but with a small group of parishioners doing what in them lay to back the pastor and group of school Sisters.

Some time ago, a young Howard University student volunteered to come in to the parish and help. I mean "volunteered." There was not a penny of help available for any community work. An unusually talented young man, he began to look for something in Negro life and character that could be developed, to make something specifically of their own race, and he found it of course, in their own music—overlaid with jazz. The Sisters had trained a choir, and he began to produce biblical tableaux combined with the classic Negro spirituals and appropriate classic Catholic music.

Out of that developed a mystery play, given annually about the feast of the Assumption, which has drawn on the whole parish, old and young—one of the most devotional and artistic productions I have ever seen. I am very familiar with the old mystery plays of the Spanish padres both in the old descriptions and in their fragmentary remains among the Indians; I know the new "rural art" movement in Mexico and I have lived intimately with the Oberammergau players in years gone by. I have not seen anything that surpasses these mystery players of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in artistic promise and in devotion. They are not acting, which is the essence of their art. It is biblical because they do of their own nature what biblical characters obviously did do, a thing one does not realize fully

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until one has lived among peoples of a similar racial and cultural development as those on whom the Bible story is based. It has always seemed to me not possible for Europeans to reproduce a biblical scene. It is always translated through a mind to which it is foreign. This Anacostia experiment is a creation, but it is real, for it comes spontaneously out of deep racial springs, and out of minds to which the simplicity of the Bible story would be the natural thing, essentially the thing they would expect.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

THE COUNTRY FAIR

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editor: The gentleman of the Irish persuasion, Patrick McGowan, who has so loudly and vehemently criticized "The Country Fair," written by Padraic Colum, seems to me to be "slightly in the red" in regard to the reading of literary works. If he be as patriotically Irish as I judge, it will be a most laborious task to alter his opinion, yet I think it can be done.

In the first instance, in my way of thinking, Mr. Colum makes very clear his fondness for that quaint town C——. This is done quite logically, too, and throughout the essay, I think the majority of readers will agree with me, it continues. Certainly the towns of Ireland have some other charm besides "the beauty" and "tranquillity which has charmed so many other tourists and writers"! Genuine beauty exists also in people—the most beautiful of God's creations—does it not? The "vulgar quotation," it appears to me, is quite harmless and most expressive of the character which Mr. Colum was endeavoring to portray.

My experience is limited in essay criticism, yet I think my deductions to be as worthy as venerable Patrick McGowan's. I am but young, and am still groping for that experience and knowledge which my above-mentioned friend possesses. May we hear from Padraic Colum—and Patrick McGowan, also!

JOHN M. MUNROE.

ALL TOGETHER!

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: I read recently a letter from a subscriber suggesting one appeal for the numerous ones now made by different charities, shrines, etc. The idea is excellent and is being used most successfully in New York City by the largest savings banks, by the Neighborhood Stores and here recently by the largest and most conservative real estate agents who now run a combined ad in the *Sunday Times*.

Now I am most enthusiastic about trying to get every cultured family in the country to subscribe for, and to read, *America* or *THE COMMONWEAL*, if not both. At this moment there are millions of dollars in our savings banks, many of them undoubtedly Catholic dollars, which might be placed to better advantage. I therefore respectfully suggest, in spite of the depression, one advertising campaign for both of these periodicals and to start the ball rolling I am sending a check for \$10.00 (\$5.00 to each) for an adequate appropriation. Of course a rush of some thousands of new subscribers would entirely eliminate the need of advertising and would divert all moneys to the proper channels!

It does seem deplorable that these two important magazines—needed today so much more than pious, devotional organs—are not better supported by the young social-minded and current-events-minded Catholics of the country.

F. X. M.

BOOKS

A German Looks at France

Dieu, est-il français? by Friedrich Sieburg. Paris: Bernard Grasset.

THE GERMAN original of this book was entitled "Gott in Frankreich," an allusion to the proverb "Leben wie Gott in Frankreich," that is, lead a life of comfort and pleasure. The French title rather suggests that the translator has missed this point, but the remainder of the book seems to be well rendered, and the sense of it is absolutely clear. Moreover, it is in its French version that this book has achieved something like a European reputation, and it has been read and commented upon far more widely in France than in Germany. No apology, therefore, is needed for noticing it in the French version, to which the publisher, M. Bernard Grasset, has added an interesting postscript by way of appreciation and rejoinder.

Herr Sieburg essays the task of interpreting France to Germany from a sense of urgent duty, and with ample qualification. He has lived long in France, has learned to know the French people, and to appreciate, wholeheartedly and generously, the qualities which have made them great. It is a very German set of reasons that he produces at the outset for having written his book. Among them he says that it is because he prefers the progress of ideas to the idea of progress; another reason is that he feels more attraction for a paradise which is neglected and old-fashioned, than for a sparkling, model universe with no sense of hope or pleasure. France, he says wittily, is "le pays de la juste milieu et des fausses statistiques." In other words, he feels an instinctive love for the leisure, the sense of well-being and comfort and easy orderliness which one finds in France, and he implies that this is more sympathetic to him than the rigidity and efficiency and anxious correctness of his own country. Germany, he says, should not renounce her own future merely because France is unable to detach herself from her past; the two nations must be willing to march together. Therefore he has, for the sake of the happiness of both of them, undertaken this essay in interpretation.

It is a remarkable enterprise—remarkable even in a field where they have been other admirable competitors, such as Professor Ernst Robert Curtius, whose books on contemporary French thought and literature are among the best things of their kind written in Europe since the war. Herr Sieburg has a different method of approach; he plunges straight into the fifteenth century, and makes his point of departure the great national awakening of France inspired by Saint Joan of Arc. Taking a leaf out of Bernard Shaw's brilliant if partly fallacious drama, this German critic represents the saint of Domrémy as the creator of the unity of France and the founder of French nationalism, the original inspirer even of the contemporary French idea of Catholicism and universal humanitarianism as a mere French religion. Thus has France, according to this writer—who does not blame so much as admire and envy—nationalized a supranational religion and an international philosophy. To be a Frenchman is not to be of a particular race, but to enter into a community; it is almost the same as becoming a Catholic, and Herr Sieburg quotes the remark attributed to Maurice Barrès: "Je suis athée, mais naturellement je suis catholique." One may well think that this part of Herr Sieburg's book gives an altogether one-sided view of religion in France, but there is force in his further observation: "Le Français n'a pas l'esprit protestant; ses rapports avec la vie sont individuels, ses rapports avec l'esprit sont organisés."

In the second part of his book Herr Sieburg develops his fundamental idea along rather more convincing lines. Like André Gide some years ago, he observes the contradiction between the French spirit and the spirit of music. He remarks on the French recoil from the idea of the infinite, and he quotes poems of Goethe and Holderlin which, he quite rightly remarks, could not have been written by Frenchmen. He insists on the French distrust of generalizing, of the really wide European outlook as conceived by German or English internationalists. It is true that since the end of the war there have been signs in France of the development of such an international spirit, but will these persist? "Celui qui le saurait posséderait la clef de l'avenir de l'Europe." Later Herr Sieburg indicates his belief that the spirit of French nationalism will be maintained—that kind of nationalism which is never so strong as when it is advocating international ideals—for he urges that although there must be Franco-German understanding, Franco-German friendship there can never be. He seems to wish to induce his fellow countrymen to recognize this unalterable characteristic of the French nation, and accommodate themselves to it. Will this come about? On the whole, in spite of his love for France, Herr Sieburg seems to be doubtful, for he remarks that "c'est la tragédie de ce pays, que toutes ses vertus et ses mérites portent en eux une force qui tend à exclure le monde qui l'environne." Against this conclusion, and against the idea of France as a self-isolating unit in the comity of nations, M. Grasset protests with great courtesy and firmness in his essay in postscript. He will not have the contradiction between French nationalism and the humanistic ideal, and he soundly parries Herr Sieburg's remarks on the first by a reference to the Pan-German philosophy and propaganda. It is a most interesting duel between friends and mutual admirers. One may question the conclusions on both sides, but it is not to be denied that the reading of the whole book will stimulate thought on the most important intellectual, cultural and political problem confronting Europe today.

JOHN STAPLETON.

Mr. Strachey and Some Others

Portraits in Miniature, by Lytton Strachey. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.

THESE canny and exquisite studies by the author of "Queen Victoria," reminiscent as they are of more ambitious work done in the past, yet contain and gather up the "fine gold" of Strachey. "A biography," remarks the Sage of Bloomsbury, "should either be as long as Boswell's or as short as Aubry's. . . . Failing the first method, let us have no half-measures; let us have the pure essentials—a vivid image on a page or two, without explanations, transitions, commentaries or padding." It is a singularly high, happy and none too easy ideal in a biographer, and if, as in the present volume, it is not realized in its perfection, one can be grateful for faults which, in the case of Mr. Strachey, are a pleasure to find and ponder. For his commentaries are unfailingly funny, and his padding is irresistible.

Mr. Strachey despite the ironic urbanity of his eighteenth-century ideal, is what is known as a prejudiced writer. Historians without prejudice make singularly dull writers. It is not enough to absorb facts, or to state them. Yet in what is in some respects his wittiest book, "Eminent Victorians," he was grossly unfair to a great ecclesiastic, Cardinal Manning. There is nothing of that sort of prejudice in the present volume which should be read by every lover of beautiful letters with an infinite zest.

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NEXT WEEK

An omnibus survey of world affairs in twenty minutes would seem to be such a fast ride that little would result but breathlessness. Yet we confidently believe that a very clear, comprehensive and cohesive picture will be given to the reader of *WILLIAMSTOWN*, by F. J. Gunning, in next week's *COMMONWEAL*. . . . *EBB TIDE*, by Burton Kline, is a complete analysis of American magazine fiction, which he believes is suffering from commercialization and too much New York. Metropolitan flippancy and cynicism he finds is replacing a sense of the grandeur and diversity of the United States, due to most of America's leading magazines being edited from New York. Hopefully he sees very definite signs for an improvement, which writers and readers alike will appreciate. . . . *A SALESMAN AND DEPRESSION*, by S. L. Walker, is a brilliant, first-hand picture of what is happening these days to the shock troops of commerce. It is both illuminating and, for the reader at least, amusing. . . . *QUOTH THE RAVEN*, by the incomparable Enid Dinnis, is a literary treat. The color and the feeling of the extraordinary soliloquy is vividly achieved, and the shadows of great events in a historic past tremble in the air. . . . A subtle and pervasive charm breathes from *TWILIGHT IN MAYO*, by Terence O'Donnell. It is of a land of beauty, of goodness and simplicity and magic revisited and has that same rich native quality that was captured by Synge, only here it is perhaps done with more kindliness.

The second part of the book, dealing with six English historians is especially commendable. Mr. Strachey has really the devil's own knack of isolating and mortally penetrating the weak spot in the armor of his formidable subjects—the breezy and exasperating Philistinism of Macaulay, the bad temper of Carlyle, the almost insane inconsistency of Froude. Thus in commenting on Carlyle's fine, gloomy passage on the death of Louis XV, he remarked, "Surely poor Louis Quinze might be allowed to die without a sermon from Chelsea." This is amusing, and also in a way it is fine criticism of a method, crystallized in a single phrase. A better example is the treatment of Henry VIII in the essay on Froude. "He refused to see," says Strachey, "that the Defender of the Faith combined in a peculiar manner the unpleasant vices of meanness and brutality; no! he made the Reformation; he saved England." "How," adds Mr. Strachey with exquisite contempt, "the execution of Catherine Howard—a young girl who amused herself—helped forward Protestant England, we are not told." The question was rhetorical, but Mr. Strachey could have scored another point had he answered it himself. Hume, Gibbon and Bishop Creighton are also included in his gallery of historians. Other portraits are of James Boswell, Sir John Harington, John Aubrey and the Abbé Morellet.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

Shakespeare Not Himself

Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays, by Eva Turner Clark. New York: William Farquhar Payson. \$7.50.

IN THOROUGHLY practical and equally fascinating fashion Eva Turner Clark presents in "Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays" her confirmation of the theory—advanced a few years ago by J. Thomas Looney—that Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, wrote the tragedies, comedies and poetry accredited for centuries to William Shakespeare.

Mrs. Clark sets out upon her quest by studying the records of the "Court Revels"—that concise chronicle of spectacular events without which skyrocketing the reign of Elizabeth would have been fairly insupportable. A star-firework in this premeditated gaiety was Edward de Vere—young, good-looking, rich, fashionable, of glittering mentality, impeccable manners and the effect of him capped by his active concern in the drama. Mrs. Clark presents Lord Oxford as a glorified publicist of Elizabeth. She matches historical allusions, characters and events in the plays with contemporaneous men and matter, giving to each play the purpose of apexing the glory of Her Majesty.

The burnished barge of Cleopatra is the state-barge of Elizabeth; Walter Raleigh is the "hidden hero" of "The Winter's Tale"; "Coriolanus" was inspired by the saga of Francis Drake. Mary Stuart is said to be Constance in "King John." There are so many "hidden allusions" to the Queen of Scotland in so many of the plays, and all of them so unfavorable, that whoever did write the plays cannot escape the stencil of the propagandist. "As You Like It" was written upon Elizabeth's public pledge to marry the Duke of Alençon—Rosalind standing for the queen. Beatrice is Lady Anne Cecil, wife of Oxford, and Benedick is Oxford, who also fancies himself as Hamlet and, in some far-fetched fashion, as Romeo with the houses of Montague and Capulet those of de Vere and Howard. Katharine the Shrew is Oxford's sister, Lady Mary de Vere, who married "the brave Lord Willoughby." So it goes on. . . .

Mrs. Clark has written a book which is absorbing—as much aside from as with, the thrilling theory it supports.

HENRY KIRK.

When Rome Was Dark

Latin Writers of the Fifth Century, by Eleanor Shipley Duckett. New York: Henry Holt and Company. \$2.50.

THE OLD yet still prevailing notion that scholars and their works are somehow divorced from common folk and lay readers has in these latter days been happily put to rout by such books as Henry Osborn Taylor's "The Medieval Mind," Edward Kennard Rand's "Founders of the Middle Ages," Eileen Power's "Medieval English Nunneries" and others. In their pages the eagerness and vivacity of their own consuming interests set other minds aglow. Miss Duckett's book, "Latin Writers of the Fifth Century," belongs in this aristocracy since, in the alertness of its presentation, its keen feeling for an almost forgotten age, the vividness and the humor of its portraits, its pulsating style, it proves its author not only undivorced from the concerns and affairs of the present, but capable through her very understanding of that present to interpret the past.

Granting then that the classicists, the mediaevalists, the historians and the theologians will be interested in this first survey in English of the literature of the fifth century, and will find therein much valuable matter hitherto unchronicled, what has it to offer the lay reader? First of all, it affords the dramatic picture of a dark and disastrous era—the last confusion and disruption of the Roman Empire. Secondly, as a relief from barbarian menace and invasion, it provides "quiet backwaters in which during these troubled years lovers of Holy Writ found leisure for expounding its story." In the provincial retreats of Southern Gaul and Africa lived Christian poets, whose lines in Miss Duckett's beautiful metrical translations, so reminiscent of Milton, were ill lost, especially in an age overrun with lesser versifiers. Among them were Avitus, Sedulius, Dracontius, whose names ring strangely in one's ears.

Again, and perhaps best of all its offerings to unspecialized readers, is the presentation of Jerome and Augustine, not primarily as philosophers or Fathers, theologians or bishops, or defenders of the young Faith against the false Pelagians, but rather as unforgettable personalities. These are shown chiefly through their manifold correspondence not only with one another but with all sorts and conditions of men. Jerome in "two nights of toil" recounts the holy deeds of a certain widow, Paula, who left her children to preside over a convent in Palestine. Not all examples of the saint's correspondence show the benevolence proffered to these ancient ladies or to the lion of the famous legend! Jerome on occasion can be most cutting in his scornful flagellations.

The letter-writing of Augustine affords even more fascinating reading. Some one hundred and forty letters composed in the last thirty years of his life range in length "from a short note to a whole *liber*," and vary in content from those dealing with matters of Christian doctrine to others concerned with personal and trivial matters: "The widow Juliana is warmly congratulated on the taking of the veil by her daughter Demetrias; Felicia, of unwedded state, is given kindly exhortation in her perplexity at the unworthy conduct of some of the supposedly holy clerics, and bidden to write back and say she is relieved in this distress. A gift of a tunic . . . is accepted from the maiden Sapida; this is contrary to the bishop's expressed desire, but he does not want to appear unkind to her in her bereavement and is wearing the said garment even as he writes. Ecdicia seeks consolation in haste, pouring out lament because her husband has deserted her for evil ways. But Augustine . . . learns that she has driven the unhappy man from his home and Christian life by her extravagant attempts at virtuous living. . . . Sound

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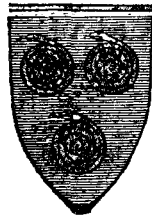
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counsel and severe rebuke meet therefore her prayer for aid. . . Far better would it be to conciliate her husband by her fair manners than to annoy him by her black garment, and if she must dress like a nun, at least to ask his consent."

Space forbids comment on Miss Duckett's fine treatment of "The City of God," on her interesting chapter concerning fifth-century monasticism and Saint Martin of Tours, on her presentation of secular prose. It is sufficient to say that her book will prove, in the words of Professor Rand, not only "indispensable" for students of the thought and the writings of the fifth century but of real worth and charm to the unspecialized minds of those who still maintain, in the midst of an harassed era, a thirst for real knowledge and a curiosity to explore an obscure but thoroughly dramatic period in Christian history.

MARY ELLEN CHASE.

A New Artist*The Opening of a Door, by George Davis. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.*

THIS living picture—it is that, far more than a progressing story—of the pre-college manhood of an American writer in the milieu of his relatives, automatically recalls Thomas Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel." Both are first novels, their theme is the same, and their accessory material differs only as a high-gear group of eccentrics in Asheville differs from a similar group in Chicago. Yet their effect is not at all the same, a fact reflecting possibly the divergence of temperament between their authors, but certainly the abyss between two types of writing tradition. Mr. Wolfe's vision was unmodified by artistic sophistication (perhaps by accident), and the one thing his book had surely was ecstasy. Mr. Davis has plainly felt to the full (perhaps also by accident) the doctrines of balance and objectivity, and one is tempted to say that ecstasy is the only thing his book lacks.

It is an important achievement, in the almost troubling perfection of its writing, and even more, in the nature and mastery of its method. The discipline and vigilance of that method are phenomenal in a writer still in his twenties. For the heightened vision, the authoritative romantic flair, Mr. Davis substitutes an intent patience, an accuracy at once passionate and detached, a finality of selection, which are just as inseparably the property of art. The technical symbol of this method is the subduing of his central character. Mr. Wolfe never made the Gant family more than a background for their wild young poet, and frequently they seemed like the phantasmagoria of his own brain. In this book it is the family who emerge in high relief; young Edward (undoubtedly Mr. Davis's own figure of identification) remains shadowy and unelucidated, a pair of eyes through which we watch them.

Colorful and odd they are rather than significant, unfulfilled yet without the stature for true tragedy; and as I have already said, their creator has no religion about them save the religion of intense and purified curiosity. Yet from unremarkable outlines they grow upon us gradually and smoothly, these Scotch-American MacDougalls, as with flawless instinct the cumulatively revealing items are released to us, until we are possessed with a deep and exciting sense of their separate life. Their center is grandma, still the strongest-willed and most vital among them though her wits are gone. Then comes grandpa, living and dying in the only refuge he has found from grandma's domination: silence. Then their children—lessened beings, somehow, as so often happens, beings incapable of either stamping life with grandma's imperiousness, or receding from it in grandpa's unmoving protest: Aunt Flora, humble, officious,

infuriating; the passionate, grotesquely wedded Aunt Theodora; the theosophist saint Aunt Alexandra; the two pitiful brothers, Uncle Lincoln (a perfect and fearful portrait), and Uncle Albert, the meager little barber. There is nothing lyrical or benign in the picture, and the author has not the philosophy of compassion. But he has an incorruptible austerity about communicating what he sees without bitterness and without derision, which marks a really distinguished mind. With his technical and literary gifts, it should give him a permanent importance in the field of our fiction.

MARY KOLARS.

Rescuing Russia

Silver Trumpets Calling, by Lucille Borden. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.50.

THERE is a certain pedantry in Mrs. Borden's proof of the authenticity of the background against which she has placed the characters of this, her most recent novel. None who are really informed about conditions of today in Soviet Russia will doubt that she has realistically adhered to their description. On the other hand she has set her noble hero and heroine and the Soviet authorities reacting so fantastically that the reader is inclined to dismiss the book as a figment of the imagination. This is to be deplored because the author's subject-matter was exceptionally good and would have been decidedly more effective had there been no attempt toward propaganda.

Princess Johanna de Kasatkin of Russia, following the Russian cataclysm, devotes her life and fortune to the succor of her emigré countrymen in Rome. Prince Nikolai, her fiancé, whom she has not seen for a decade, meanwhile is in Russia where, in order to continue his work of conducting a two-day flying traffic in human freight—westward with destitute children and eastward with priests—he has ostensibly complied with all Soviet regulations, including those which obliged him to marry. Here was material for a stirring novel which merits more than the facile resolution Miss Borden has given it. Yet for those who like "Graustark" in their reading, "Silver Trumpets Calling" will provide a few pleasant hours.

JOHN GILLAND BRUNINI.

Thinking for the Classroom

Scholastic Metaphysics: Part II, Natural Theology, by John F. McCormick, S.J. Chicago: Loyola University Press. \$2.00.

FATHER McCORMICK completes his text-book on metaphysics by the publication of this volume. The experience of his years of teaching is clearly seen not only in the organization of his material, but also in the very typographical devices he has adopted to drive home important stages in the development of his topics. This book is not offered to the general public as a free and easy discussion of metaphysical problems. It is rather a concise guide to Scholastic thought in this particular sphere. The selected bibliography, the lists of propositions to be explained and demonstrated, the points for further study and the precise references to passages for outside reading all converge to make this work fulfil its function as a text-book, namely—to quote from the preface—"it trains the student to go beyond it."

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Briefer Mention

Alexandrian Poetry under the First Three Ptolemies, by Auguste Couat; translated by James Loeb, with a supplementary chapter by Emile Cahen. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$6.50.

THE ALEXANDRIAN poets, for all their learning and their little inspiration, have been no slight tributaries to the poetic stream. Callimachus and Theocritus were great artists, however much they have borrowed from libraries. Apollonius Rhodius contrived to write an epic which college boys still read with relative interest. To describe these poets and their works, to sketch in the minor figures of the era and to sketch the cultural background against which they moved were some of the purposes entertained by the scholarly Couat, whose book is old but still valuable. Dr. Loeb has now prepared an excellent translation, the smoothness and accuracy of which are characteristic of the great service he has rendered the cause of the classics. A supplementary chapter by Professor Cahen lists the results of such recent discoveries as have added to or modified the learnings of Couat's time. This book is an important addition to the English-speaking classicist's library, and should lend aid to the general effort to promote study of the glories of Greece and Rome.

Ultimo. Projections by John Vassos. Text by Ruth Vassos. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. \$5.00.

THIS book, with its haunting modernistic drawings, is more or less of a nightmare. The text evokes the latter days of man's life on earth: a blanket of glittering ice covers the surface of the globe, over which the sun peers feebly during a few hours of the day, and humanity has taken to dwelling beneath the ground. So gradually has all this occurred and so accustomed are the denizens of "Ultimo" to their state that only vague traditions of a life in the open survive. All their days are scientifically arranged and motivated; God and faith have apparently been forgotten. Of course this fantastic text merely affords Mr. Vassos an opportunity to draw fantastic visions. He manages very well, in his usual intellectualist fashion of contrasting black and white, spirals and curves. Some of the pictures have a rare icy suggestiveness.

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